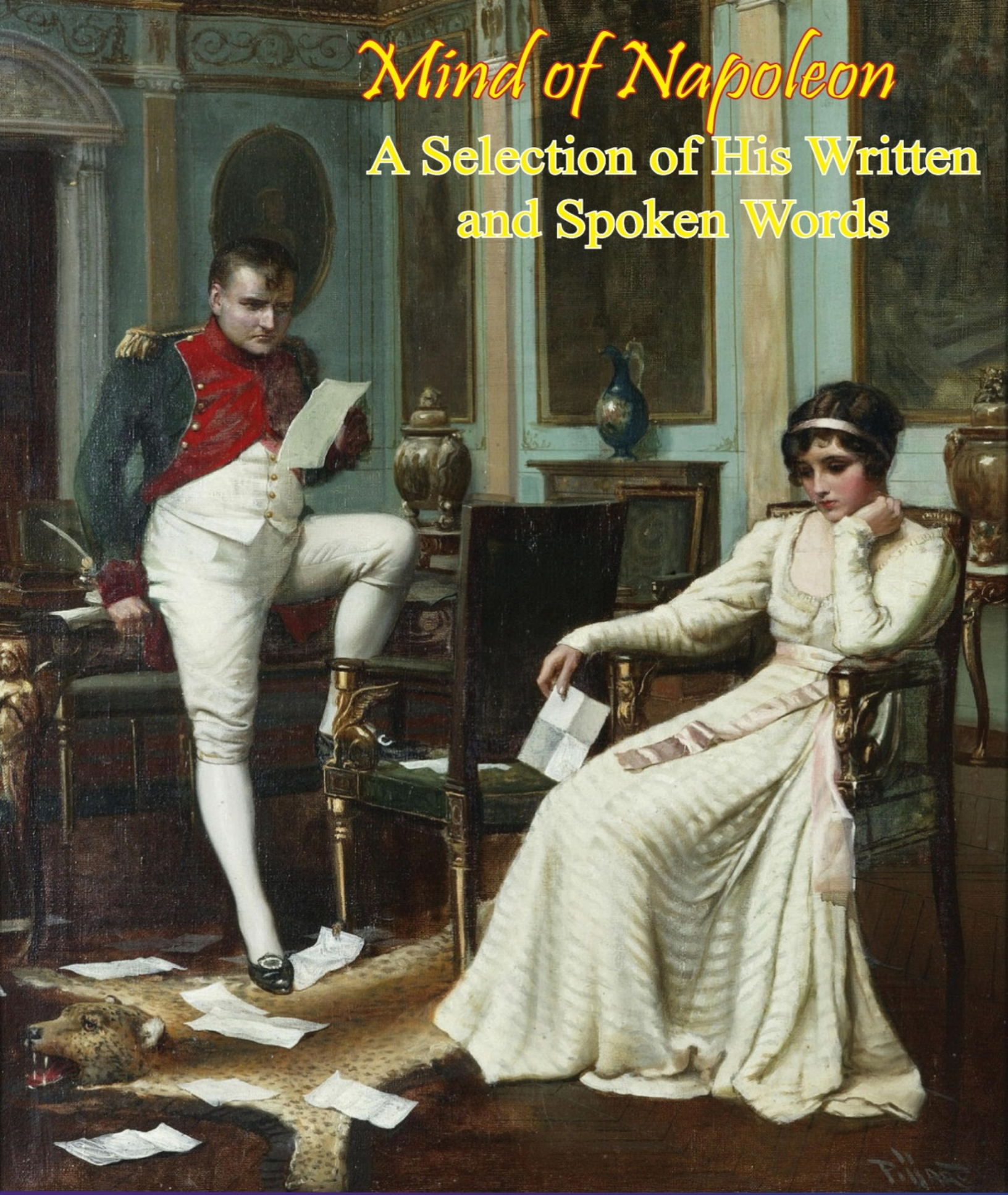

Mind of Napoleon

A Selection of His Written and Spoken Words

J. Christopher Herold

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Although in most cases we have retained the Author's original spelling and grammar to authentically reproduce the work of the Author and the original intent of such material, some additional notes and clarifications have been added for the modern reader's benefit.

We have also made every effort to include all maps and illustrations of the original edition the limitations of formatting do not allow of including larger maps, we will upload as many of these maps as possible.

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THE MIND OF NAPOLEON

A Selection from His Written and Spoken Words

Edited and Translated by

J. CHRISTOPHER HEROLD

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PREFACE

THIS IS NOT a source book, not a collection of documents. It is a selection of written and spoken utterances on a variety of subjects, grouped according to broad themes and designed to give the reader an insight into the mind of a man who combined energy of thought and energy of action to an exceptional degree.

Since Napoleon felt no urge to expound his thought systematically, this book is made up of many fragments, some of them contradictory. I have attempted to show in my Introduction that despite such fragmentation and contradictions there exists in Napoleon's thought a unifying pattern. In the book itself, however, I have refrained from editorial comment, which might easily seem to establish links and relationships where perhaps none exist. A few explanatory remarks were necessary here and there, but generally I included only such selections as can be readily understood without specialized knowledge or tedious explanations.

Whether or not Napoleon seriously intended to invade England, or how he hoped to ruin her economy by the Continental System, or how he organized his armies, or who should be given credit for his victory at Marengo—these are interesting questions, but they lie in the historian's domain and they are not exactly uppermost in the minds of non-specialists. The figure of Napoleon himself, on the other hand, his thoughts on men, society, government, religion, war, politics, art, science, history, and himself —these are topics of undiminished significance and interest in our own time, and they are among those included in this book. A less inclusive volume would lack balance; if more inclusive, it would defeat one of its chief purposes, which is to hold the interest and stimulate the thought of the

intelligent but non-specialized reader.

As for the historian, he will find no new facts, but if he hopes to gain some fresh glimpse of Napoleon's mind and thought, he will perhaps be rewarded to some degree. He may, of course, have read all the sources on which this volume is based—but then, he may have read them for a purpose other than that of culling Napoleon's thoughts, and at any rate the abundance of the material is such that many links as well as contradictions probably escaped his attention. Or else he may be familiar with one or several of the similar collections that have appeared from time to time in the past century and a quarter. But these collections generally had ulterior motives—usually to glorify Napoleon and the memory of his Empire—and they were, in any case, addressed to the nineteenth-century public, whose perspective differed not a little from ours. More recent compilations frequently are refurbished versions of the older ones. None displays a serious attempt at an organic presentation of its material, and none utilizes as great a variety of sources as does this one. Such assertions may sound obnoxiously self-assured, but if I could not make them in good faith I would not publish this book. Moreover, no competing work is now in print in English. The one English work which the present selection duplicates to any appreciable extent is Napoleon's *Letters,* edited and translated by J. M. Thompson and published in Everyman's Library (Dutton, 1954). There is, of course, no duplication whatever of plan and purpose, and thus it requires no chivalry on my part to recommend Mr. Thompson's excellent selection.

The topical organization I chose to adopt requires no justification. Others would have done things differently. Even the decision whether to include a quotation under one heading rather than another is an individual and personal one. Certain topics—such as religion—were considered by Napoleon from so many angles that they had to be treated under several

more general heads. A more lexicographic type of arrangement seemed to me artificial and mechanical as well as boring.

The physical presentation of the volume requires a word of explanation. The book is divided into thirteen general themes; these are divided into subsidiary sections, which in turn are subdivided, for the sake of logical continuity, into sets of one or more quotations. The sets are numbered consecutively from 1 to 340, and the source of each quotation is given under the corresponding numbers in the Sources and Notes at the end of the book. Chronological sequence has been observed only within each of these numbered sets, and even there a few minor exceptions occur. However, the date of each quotation is indicated, either in brackets or in an introductory sentence, along with such other information as seemed pertinent—whether the source is a letter or a conversation, and the like. Some additional information may be found in the Notes. As a rule, uniform consistency has been sacrificed to brevity; where the exact date of an utterance or the name of the recipient of a letter seemed informative, they were given; where not, they were omitted. A brief chronology of the main events in Napoleon’s career and biographical notes have been placed at the back of the book for the reader’s convenience.

The sources used fall into three categories: (1) Napoleon’s writings, including autograph manuscripts and dictations of letters, orders, decisions, bulletins, proclamations, newspaper articles, memoirs, commentaries, etc.; (2) Napoleon’s oral opinions as given at the Conseil d'état, including stenographic transcripts, official minutes, and unofficial notes taken by various councilors; (3) recorded conversations and reminiscences of Napoleon’s contemporaries from about 1800 to 1821. The conversations are, of course, of unequal reliability, but an attempt has been made to select only those which seemed reasonably plausible or which are corroborated in

other sources.

The translation is entirely my own. Several of the quotations, however, are transcribed from sources originally published in English, notably those from Dr. O'Meara, one of the Evangelists of Saint Helena. His awkward prose, interlarded with Italian and French, is English in name only; I took a few liberties in transcribing it.

I wish to thank the Librairie Plon for extending permission to use several passages from *Mémoires du général Caulaincourt*, first published in 1933. These passages appear under Nos. 59, 75, 121, 205, 226, 231, 245, 254, 259, 265, 319, 322, and 335.

There are several other debts of gratitude which I wish to acknowledge here and which I hope I may some day repay with interest. I thank Professor Jacques Barzun for the encouragement he gave me, for the time he devoted to reading my manuscript, and for the many lucid suggestions he made for its improvement. To my friends and colleagues at Columbia University Press—and in particular to Evelyn Boyce, Eugenia Porter, William Bridgwater, Leon E. Seltzer, and Henry H. Wiggins—I give my thanks for the patient and painstaking care with which they nursed my manuscript. While assuming sole responsibility for its faults, I credit many improvements to their suggestions. Lastly, I owe to Barbara Chapman far more than she realizes.

J. CHRISTOPHER HEROLD

New York

May 5, 1955

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INTRODUCTION

You ask me, what is this General Bonaparte?...To know what he is, one would have to be he. Junot to his father, 1793

FEW LIVES are as thoroughly documented as Napoleon's. Yet aside from some general truths, little is known with certainty. Even the facts remain in dispute; his thoughts are enigmatic in their apparent contradictions; his intentions are mysterious. Napoleon himself foresaw this uncertainty, and he commented: "I would have found it very difficult to assert with any degree of truth what was my whole and real intention."

Indeed, why should a great man's mind and soul be more transparent than those of the most humble and obscure? Who knows himself or others with true knowledge? The more we know of a man, the more numerous become the unanswered questions. And yet the impossibility of obtaining definitive answers should not discourage the questioner. As Napoleon remarked when young, "*Why* and *how* are such useful questions that they cannot be asked too often."

Our concern in this book is not with the acts of the man, or with his character or psychology, but with his thought and mind. Once expressed, thought is less mysterious than the thinker; the mystery is merely in the unexpressed residue. Spinoza is more easily understood than the village idiot. Unfortunately, between comprehending Spinoza's philosophy and comprehending Spinoza's mind there is a line that cannot be crossed. From his thought and from his manner of ordering it we can form some idea of his mind—but that is all.

In the case of Napoleon or of the village idiot the situation is still more

complex than with Spinoza, for no matter what they say, we still keep wondering what they *really* think; whereas with Spinoza, we may be reasonably sure that what he really thinks is precisely what he says. Let us now dismiss the idiot (though his presence was not irrelevant): what we have left is a philosopher, to whom thought is an end in itself, and a man of action, to whom thought is a means to an end. Philosophers are manipulators of thought; action is not their direct concern. Napoleon, no matter how deep his thought, was a manipulator of things and men. Hence his thought necessarily lacked that rounded, self-contained unity and harmonious order in which the philosopher rebuilds the universe and finds his peace. Like Margaret Fuller, Napoleon accepted the universe. He was at peace from the outset. Cosmic problems stimulated his fancy without causing him unrest. God, to him, was the solution of a socio-political problem, and in religion he saw “the mystery of the social order.”

Such absence of system, such intellectual opportunism make Napoleon’s thought as a whole more difficult to understand than Spinoza’s. In Spinoza, each thought is a step to another thought; in Napoleon, each thought is a step to an action. In Spinoza, each step is difficult, demanding concentrated attention, but the view from the summit is bathed in the light of all-embracing recognition. In Napoleon, few individual thoughts are difficult to grasp. At their best, they afford deep insights—but never a panoramic vista. This is not to say that Napoleon’s thought lacks unity or coherence. Yet what unifying principle there is remains unstated, implicit, hence open to interpretation.

In Spinoza’s philosophy, no thought on a given topic can be detached from the context of his whole thought without doing it violence. In Napoleon, each thought must be related not so much to the context of his other thoughts as to the context of his total activity. In many instances, it

should also be related to the particular action on which it bears. By “total activity” we mean the total force of energy of which he was possessed. For it was the combination of his unique activity with his exceptional but by no means unique intellectual powers that made Napoleon what he was.

Goethe said that Napoleon’s mind was the greatest the world had ever produced. He could not have based his judgment on what the Emperor said to him during their two interviews; both men said one or two profundities and many platitudes. No—what Goethe saw in Napoleon was a radiant power of the mind that cut through and dispelled the mists of speculation, strip ping all problems down to their simplest elements, discarding all obstacles to action:

> “What centuries have dimly meditated
> His mind surveys in brightest clarity;
> All that is petty has evaporated,
> Here nothing is of weight save earth and sea.”

Such admiration is not surprising in the man who made Faust change the translation of John 1:1 from “In the beginning was the Word” to “In the beginning was the Deed.” Like the famed sun of Austerlitz, Napoleon’s mind stood solitary in a cloudless sky to light up naked action with its brightest rays.

The present book, though it shows Napoleon’s mind in action, can afford only occasional glimpses of the active man. Even his mental activity is but fragmentarily revealed, for that activity was equally intense whether he spoke of questions of general human import or of trivial, practical, and ephemeral details—budgets, bookkeeping, fortifications, civil engineering, army rations, or the procurement of remounts. The reader has been spared such topics not merely because they are trivial and dull but chiefly because

they acquire significance only in their totality. Yet those who take the time and trouble to survey the whole of Napoleon's record will be rewarded with the insight that here was a man to whom nothing useful was trivial or dull. To the luminous strength of his mind, to its infinite power of concentration, there was no subject, no matter how arduous or remote, that could not be learned and conquered. If Napoleon had found it useful to learn Sanskrit, tightrope walking, and plumbing, he would have learned Sanskrit, tightrope walking, and plumbing—without an instant's hesitation or fear. When we consider that virtually everything Napoleon knew he had picked up as he went along, we cannot help being awestruck: what we face here is not the divine spark but a dynamo.

The utter fearlessness with which the young and inexperienced general addressed himself to problems seemingly beyond a single man's scope characterizes the heroic element in Napoleon's mind. There is something of a Hercules in it. Consider, for instance, how the thirty-year-old First Consul, within a few weeks after taking power, established a civil administration which proved to be the one and only stable political institution France has had in the past century and a half. There are those who see in Napoleon merely the military strong man, the dictator, just as Hercules is esteemed for his muscle rather than his brain. Yet exceptional mental powers are needed to devise a scheme as simple and bold as Hercules' method of cleaning out the Augean stables: a graduate of an agricultural college would never have thought of it. Alexander's handling of the Gordian knot may seem crude; Aristotle never taught him such a trick—but perhaps he learned it from Diogenes, the great simplifying Cynic.

After 1805 or so, Napoleon's mind gradually lost its heroic cast. Instead of approaching new problems with his usual fearless effort, he was content with capricious pronouncements that brooked no contradiction. Then came

progressive disease, and with it spells of drowsy lethargy which in the end became almost continuous. “How I have fallen!” he exclaimed in 1820. “I, whose activity knew no limits, whose head never rested! I am plunged in a lethargic stupor, I must make an effort to raise my eyelids. Sometimes I used to dictate, on different subjects, to four or five secretaries who wrote as fast as I spoke. But I was Napoleon then; today I am nothing....I vegetate, I no longer live.” Yet even then, almost to his last breath, the old Napoleon revived as soon as his mind regained temporary strength. Then all became activity—dazzling conversation, furious gardening, tireless dictation. To his lucid mind, inaction was unbearable.

This supreme combination of intellect and energy gave Napoleon’s mind a magnetic, almost supernatural power—a power that seems to radiate from his pictured features and endows his very name with magic. If modern times have produced a mythological figure, that figure is Napoleon. Abraham Lincoln is a possible rival, but as a figure of mythology Napoleon has a great advantage: like the Olympians, he is beyond good and evil, a true pagan god, eminently classical and Greek. Lincoln, a Christ-like figure from the backwoods, belongs to a different circle.

Few men have expressed the Napoleon *mystique* so suggestively as Heine in these few sentences: “His countenance, too, was of the complexion we find on the marble heads of Greeks and Romans. The features were as nobly proportioned as those of ancient statues, and on his face was written: Thou shalt have no other god but me.”

This *mystique* is not to be confused with the so-called Napoleonic legend, a political fabrication for which Napoleon himself is only partly responsible. Representing the Emperor as the champion of liberal and popular aspirations, the legend helped powerfully in placing Napoleon III

on the throne and in keeping Bonapartism alive. It appealed to sentimentalists, chauvinists, and naive liberals, but it had nothing to do with the Napoleon *mystique* of less gullible men—Byron and Stendhal, for instance.

Examined one by one, Napoleon's accomplishments and utterances lose much of their magic. Their imperfections and errors, their improvised and derivative nature become only too apparent, and the man's personal defects, his boundless egotism, deceitfulness, and callousness stand exposed. The sum of the parts is less than the whole. Unfortunately, this analytical "debunking," if applied to almost any great man (with the possible exception of a handful of saints), would similarly divert attention from the majestic outline of the forest to the imperfection of the trees. A critical examination of a great man's thought or deeds always leads to the ultimate, the only really important question: which is the deeper reality—the whole or the parts? If the answer is, the parts, then all greatness stands diminished. But before attempting to answer this question, let us return to Napoleon's thought.

The near-supernatural power of his mind, we have postulated, is a quality that has passed into his very name. To experience that power, no knowledge of his thought or deeds is necessary; simple imagination suffices. In fact, knowledge is a hindrance unless it is fairly extensive: then, by an effort of the mind, the scholar is able to apprehend something of the nature of the whole Napoleon and to understand rationally what is dimly sensed by the impressionable imagination.

The collection of Napoleonic thoughts contained in this volume cannot give such an integral insight unless the reader is willing to make an effort of the imagination. On the contrary, it is more likely to furnish ammunition to

the analytical critic. There is nothing wrong in this tendency; in fact, one of the purposes of this book is to show Napoleon at his best, at his worst, and in between. But some sort of corrective is needed to direct the reader's attention to the essential coherence of Napoleon's thought, a coherence which is present despite all the contradictions, despite the lack of system, despite the intellectual opportunism. The attempt at a synthesis in this Introduction does not concern itself with Napoleon's views on individual topics—this would be a mere rehash—but with the general character of his thought.

II

Napoleon described his mental mechanism in three characteristic conversations.

"Work," he said in 1816, "is my element. I am born and built for work. I have known the limitations of my legs, I have known the limitations of my eyes; I have never been able to know the limitations of my working capacity."

In the same year, in another conversation reported by his companion in exile, Las Cases, "the Emperor explained the clarity of his ideas and his ability to prolong his occupations indefinitely without experiencing fatigue by saying that each object and each business was filed in his head as in a chest of drawers. 'When I wish to interrupt one occupation,' he said, 'I shut its drawer and open another. They do not mix, and when I am busy with one I am not importuned or tired by the other....When I want to sleep, I shut all the drawers, and I am fast asleep.'"

And in 1817 he remarked: "I cannot write well, because my ideas and my hand are in two different currents. The ideas go faster, and then good-bye legibility! I can only dictate, and this is convenient, because it is as if I

were conversing."

Tirelessness, concentration, speed—these were the characteristics of the mechanism.

At first, the mechanism was hampered by the presence of superfluous parts which prevented smooth functioning. "In my youth, I had illusions," said Napoleon on his deathbed. He added: "I got rid of them fast." What were those illusions?

They were the illusions of the 1780s, such as the belief that philosophical systems and the application of political theories were capable of perfecting society. "Until I was sixteen, I would have fought to the death for Rousseau." This is not the place to go into the reasons that made him change his mind. Without the French Revolution the break would undoubtedly have been less abrupt. By the time he was twenty-four, he had grown "old when it comes to the human heart." "Considering the alternative," he wrote his brother in 1793, "it is better to eat than be eaten." Systems and ideologies he threw overboard and henceforth scornfully belabored them as "metaphysics." Yet it would be wrong to assume that he repudiated his eighteenth-century heritage altogether. Privately, he remained a Voltairian deist throughout his life, and if he rejected the notion of human perfectibility, he nevertheless clung to the notion of social perfectibility.

A great deal of argument is possible as to what, if anything, constituted Napoleon's political philosophy. What is certain is that long before he played any political role he had discarded whatever "illusions" might have prevented him from playing it. Of man, he conceived no longer in the terms of Locke but rather in those of Hobbes, Machiavelli, and La Rochefoucauld. "Bah!" became his characteristic exclamation. Fear and self-interest were to him the underlying motives of all human behavior. All sentiments were

conventions. “Savage man”—that is, man in the state of nature—”is a dog.” Civilization was acceptance of law from force of habit or from fear. An article in the *Journal des Débats* in 1800, dictated or inspired by Napoleon, said of him: “He knows that men have always been the same, that nothing can change their nature. It is from the past that he will draw his lessons in order to shape the present.”

Not that men were wicked or that, as individuals, they did not change. Napoleon repeatedly denied such assertions. But men were weak, ineffectually selfish, and easily guided, if only their predominant passions were flattered. In leaders, however, weakness was a mortal sin. “The strong are good; only the weak are wicked,” wrote Bonaparte as early as 1791. This maxim was to become a cardinal principle of his politics.

In those long daydreaming hours of his formative years, when Napoleon used to “measure his dreams with the calipers of reason,” letting his imagination roam and then examining whether what he had imagined could be translated into reality—in those hours he also pondered the purpose and the destiny of his life. As to the purpose, his answer was definite: “We are born for the enjoyment of life. Happiness is merely the enjoyment of life in the manner that conforms best to our nature.” The question, then, was destiny, which is determined by “the manner that conforms best to our nature.”

If we speak here of destiny, we must distinguish it sharply from fate. If anyone feels that there is no apparent distinction, let him reflect on the heroic labors, the truly backbreaking efforts that men and nations have taken upon themselves for the sake of accomplishing what they thought to be their manifest destiny. Destiny is carried out, fate is suffered. Fate is ineluctable, destiny is elusive. Let it be said by the way that there may be no

such thing as either destiny or fate; yet so long as these ideas exist in the minds of men they must be reckoned with.

Exactly what Napoleon conceived his destiny to be is not clear; however, some attempt will be made at a later point to answer this question. Here it is enough to repeat two of his dicta: “All my life I have sacrificed everything —comfort, self-interest, happiness—to my destiny.” “Destiny must be fulfilled—*that is my chief doctrine.”*

Fatalism Napoleon dismissed as “just a word.” Fatalism is incompatible with an active nature. He did, to be sure, refer quite often to his “star,” to “Fortune,” and the like, but these were largely figures of speech designed to impress both friend and foe with his invincibility. The idea of fate, however, true gambler that he was, he accepted—with a few refinements.

If destiny was, in its essence, self-fulfillment, then fate was that element in human affairs which, being beyond the reach of the individual, determined ultimate success or failure. “I have made all the calculations: fate will do the rest.” “It is success that makes the great man.” Fate had another aspect, too: it was the iron necessity by which the man of action was forced to perform certain deeds in order to fulfill his destiny; and further, it was the necessity by which one act led to another, thus binding the actor in an unbreakable chain. This necessity was the modern equivalent of Fate in Greek tragedy, in which “the heroes were guilty without being criminal: they shared in the crimes of the gods.” To the modern hero, fate was simply “the nature of things”—in Napoleon’s own case, politics. “It is politics which leads to catastrophe without there being a real crime.” And to Goethe he said: “Politics is fate.”

Luck is another element in Napoleon’s formula, but not in its ordinary meaning. “A consecutive series of great actions never is the result of chance

and luck; it always is a product of planning and genius....Is it because they are lucky that [great men] become great? No, but being great, they have been able to master luck." What is luck? The ability to exploit accidents: "The vulgar would call this luck, but in fact it is the characteristic of genius." It takes genius to be lucky—the remark is profound. At Maloyaroslavets, when catastrophe was about to engulf him, he exclaimed, not, as a lesser man might, "Has my luck failed me?" but "Have I failed my luck?"

Next comes calculation, and on this subject Napoleon was eloquent. He prided himself on never having done a deed or spoken a word except from calculation. Since Napoleon was human, his boast must be taken with a grain of salt, but even so it was well justified. Lives, feelings, vices, virtues, ideals, passions—everything became mere factors in the great equations of power, war, and politics. Calculation in the sense Napoleon meant took on almost metaphysical subtleties, as is common among gamblers. "Military science"—and Napoleon applied the principles of that science to all things —"military science consists in first calculating all the possibilities accurately and then in making an almost mathematically exact allowance for accident. It is on this point that one must make no mistake: a decimal more or less may alter everything."

Daring and courage were, of course, qualities equally essential to the leader and to those he led. At the same time, they were subordinate qualities —in the led, to discipline; in the leader, to the dictates of calculation. "Napoleon made sure that he might dare, and dared," he wrote of himself. Fearlessness in the face of death was part of his natural equipment, as was indifference to human life: but, he assured Talleyrand, he was not in the least afraid of committing an act of cowardice provided it were useful to him.

Will power? Yes, but in moderation. The will must not go counter to circumstances. The greater a man is, the less will he must have and the more he depends on events and circumstances. When the propitious, the decisive moment arrives, then the will must act promptly and unhesitatingly. Hesitation is fatal; once an action is begun, it must be followed through with the utmost exertion of the will.

It is now possible to formulate what Napoleon at one point called “the indeterminate equation,” that higher mathematics of the man of destiny and genius—a mathematics that cannot be learned. In general and at every step, destiny must be fulfilled by the exploitation of every opportunity, every accident; by the exact computation of all the chances, including imponderables; by the precise determination of the decisive moment for action. The will must be curbed so as to comply with circumstances, and, after everything humanly possible has been done to secure success, the issue must be left to fate. Everything in the formula is relative, variable: “To every circumstance its own law.” The indeterminate equation itself remains immutable, however, and the fulfillment of destiny remains the supreme, unalterable principle. For its sake, all other principles may be applied or disregarded according to the moment’s need; in it all contradictions are reconciled.

There is nothing new about the formula, but two things distinguish Napoleon from others who have used it: his ruthless consistency in applying it and the ability of his mind to apply it to any given problem with almost instantaneous results. “My policies,” he said, “are the result of meditation and of strength.”

Since the great man is the product of his time, he depends on vaster trends, on the forces of history or the destinies of nations. But here we come

to what seems a knotty contradiction, for when he speaks of nations, Napoleon tends to treat destiny and fate as synonyms. Proposing a joint conquest of India to Alexander of Russia, he wrote: “It is the part of wisdom and of politics to do what destiny ordains and to follow the lead of the irresistible march of events.” And in 1812: “Russia is swept along by her fate! Let her destiny be accomplished!”

Closer examination of Napoleon’s mental processes will show that the contradiction is part of his elastic formula. First of all, although Napoleon threw out a few suggestive hints concerning the historic process, he had no settled, systematic ideas on that matter. “History I conquered rather than studied....I spurned what was of no use [to me], and I seized upon certain conclusions that pleased me.” Thus, according to the occasion, history could be “an agreed-upon fiction” and “the only true philosophy.” When it suited his purpose he would go to the past “to draw his lessons in order to shape the present”; at another point—when he seizes the dictatorship, in fact—he exclaims: “Let no one search the past for examples that might slow down our advance!” In his hands, history becomes a political tool; its very writing becomes a political service. What George Orwell was to call the “rectification of history” was in Napoleon’s eyes the historian’s patriotic duty. His pronouncements on history reflect not his convictions but merely the needs of the moment. Still, he clearly realized the value history held for the individual man of destiny as his sole guide and teacher. Hidden between the lines of his official and contradictory pronouncements there is a subtle and terrible consistency.

We must here keep in mind a distinction between the historic role of the individual, the nation, and the civilization. As for the individual, it depends merely on circumstances whether the potential man of destiny is called upon to play his part; but once he is in control of his career he himself

becomes a shaper of circumstances. By correctly applying the "indeterminate equation" he can realize his nation's destiny, subject only to the limitations of his abilities and to fate. Yet the first thing he must gauge accurately is precisely the destiny of his nation. "If such be the decree of destiny," he wrote Talleyrand in 1797, "I do not even consider it an impossibility that within a few years we may attain such great results [for France] as can be glimpsed by an ardent imagination and as only an extremely cool-headed, steadfast, and rational man can carry out." It is difficult to say just how far the cool head dared let the ardent imagination roam at that particular point, but there can be little doubt that the eventual vision was that of a universal empire dominated by France. When it turned out that fate had run counter to France's destiny, Russia became the new champion in Napoleon's mind. If he were the tsar, he said on Saint Helena, he would be "the master and arbiter of Europe." For what purpose? "To found a new society....Europe is praying for such a good deed. The old order is finished...." And, still measuring his dreams with the calipers of reason, he silently began to measure distances on the map—with his calipers.

It may be an unfair judgment, but not a farfetched one, to say that in Napoleon's philosophy the destiny of nations was chiefly to serve as the vehicle for the destinies of ambitious men. What is almost certain is that Napoleon did not link his destiny with that of France because of his love of France; rather, he loved France because he had linked his destiny with hers. "France needs me more than I need France," he said. The statement may be interpreted in several ways.

Thinking of the empires of Alexander, of the Cæsars, of Charlemagne, Napoleon envisioned himself as destined to make France the carrier of a new law and civilization. "You who know history so well," he said to

Narbonne in 1812, “are you not struck by the similarities of my government with that of Diocletian—that tight-knit web of government that I am spreading over such distances, those all-seeing eyes of the Emperor, that civil authority which I have been obliged to keep all-powerful in the midst of an entirely military empire?” And indeed, no matter how lyrical he grew on the subject of the art of war, of military conquest, of soldierly virtues, Napoleon continually and consistently emphasized that it was as a civil leader, a lawgiver, a representative of the spirit rather than the sword that he had taken upon himself the guidance of the destinies of France. His utterances on military rule verge on sheer antimilitarism.

By what may seem to be a detour we are led to Napoleon’s conception of the historic role of civilization. Civilization in his eyes was man’s gradual habituation to law by dint of tradition and experience. “If the large majority wanted to be criminals and defy the law,” he asked, “who would have the power to stop them or constrain them?” And he answers: Civilization. “Most sentiments are traditions. We experience them because they have preceded us.” “Virtually not a single human activity is determined by the simple impulse of man’s will. From childhood on we live under the sway of laws and habits.”

But when the laws lag too far behind social change, as at the time of the French Revolution, then a volcanic eruption becomes inevitable. “A revolution can be neither made nor stopped. The only thing that can be done is for one or several of its children to give it a direction.” He who would guide a revolution must not try to follow his own willful preferences: he must go “along with the opinions of the masses and with events.” This is difficult, for “what the people wants is almost never the same as what the people says. Its will and needs ought to be found not so much in the people’s mouth as in the ruler’s heart.” In his own particular instance, what

the people said it wanted was “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.” Napoleon’s heart was quick to decide that the people cared little for liberty and less for fraternity. Equality he saw as the great principle of the nineteenth century—equality and, paradoxically, love of distinction. What Napoleon claimed he gave the people was equality of opportunity, which satisfied both conflicting aspirations. He foresaw, somewhat dimly, the rise of a capitalist industrial civilization; he predicted both the growth and the end of colonialism; he took notice of nationalist aspirations, although he believed, with fatal results to himself, that they could be fanned or extinguished at will; and he expressed the conviction that post-revolutionary society was progressing toward a higher public morality. With a curious mixture of cynicism and prudishness, he exploited the vices and corruption of men at the same time that he sternly ordered an improvement of the moral tone. All in all, when it came to the social order and civilization, Napoleon’s reign foreshadowed that of Queen Victoria.

It is not clear here whether Napoleon regarded it as his mission to forward the trends of civilization or whether he merely exploited these trends for his own advancement. The question is perhaps idle, since the identification was complete. The salient characteristic of all of Napoleon’s utterances, on any subject whatsoever, no matter how remote, is that by some twist he invariably ends by placing himself at the center. The destiny of General Bonaparte, the destiny of France, the destiny of Europe, the destiny of civilization—each was, in the last analysis, merely one aspect of the same thing. “He wanted,” said Mme de Staël, “to put his gigantic self in the place of humankind.”

“Now, in his heart,” says Melville, “Ahab had some glimpse of this, namely: all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad.” Napoleon had no glimpse of this whatever. For unlike Captain Ahab, with whom in

other respects he shows striking similarities, he was not hunting any particular whale. If, as Mme de Staël asserts, he wanted to put his self in the place of humankind, he did so only by implication, simply because it was in his nature to do so, not because he had consciously conceived any such mad object.

What, then, was the object of Napoleon's quest and ambition? He repeatedly answered the question, and we must believe him: he did not know. At times he even disclaimed ambition altogether. "If I have any [ambition], it is so natural to me, so innate, so intimately linked with my existence that it is like the blood that circulates in my veins, like the air I breathe....I never am obliged to fight either against or for ambition. Ambition never is in a greater hurry than I; it merely keeps pace with the circumstances and with my general way of thinking."

"It merely keeps pace with circumstances"! To aim at world empire seemed to Napoleon a most natural thing. "Who wouldn't have, in my place?" he asked Benjamin Constant; and later he was to assert that George Washington, placed in Napoleon's circumstances, would have acted exactly as Napoleon did—or else been a fool.

Is this, then, the key to the enigma? Is the demigod nothing but a superlative brigand, equipped with infinite cunning, lying in wait for any prey that comes his way, with no other object in mind than to take as much as opportunity allows, contemptuous of those who have not sense enough to help themselves likewise? There is no lack of those who have thus asserted, and no doubt their argument has weight. Yet in this manner of thinking there is an element of shallow philistinism. Brigands are concerned with brigandage. Sometimes, they build empires—but that only goes to show that they are not made of the same stuff as other brigands.

The best clue to Napoleon's aim in life lies in his curious way of making budgets—and "outside budgets there is no salvation," he said. If, for instance, he ordered the construction of some public work or edifice, he would make sure that it was built in stages and that at the end of each stage it could be put to some use, no matter how many years might elapse before the whole was completed. If the wing of a palace, or a stretch of road or canal, could be put to use after the first year, then its cost began to be amortized in the following year and could be charged off the budget. By the time the whole was completed, it had paid for itself. By this sleight of hand, Napoleon combined long-term objectives with his passion for immediate usefulness. He did not expect the present generation to sacrifice itself for an indefinite future, nor did he wish future generations to pay the debts of the present. Such husbanding does not bespeak an unprincipled mind. In precisely the same manner, he seems to have looked upon his destiny as something that was revealed to him in installments, as the occasion arose. Each installment had to pay for itself, regardless of what the future might bring. To look too far beyond the present installment was futile. When the last installment came and he sat dying for six years on his rock, he still regarded it as a positive stage in his destiny. "My downfall raises me to infinite heights," he said. It was an amortization of immortality.

Napoleon was not one to eschew the ultimate questions. Even if, at the cost of colossal effort, his earthly destiny were accomplished—what then? There was no paradise for heroes, no Elysian Fields that he believed in, not even Heaven and Hell. "There is no immortality but the memory that is left in the minds of men." To have lived without glory, without leaving a trace of one's existence, "is not to have lived at all." Glory, "the sun of the dead" in Victor Hugo's phrase, is a chilly star, and all greatness is sad, as Napoleon remarked when he moved into the gloomy Tuileries palace. Yet

neither greatness nor glory is a matter of choice. To be great was for Napoleon to live in conformity with his nature. The end was the same for all, nonbeing; but to live without the consciousness that his memory would endure was, as he put it, to die every day. Nobody wants to die every day. It is better to live and seek the impossible. Moreover, while it is true that the sun of the dead does not warm their bones, it is equally true that the prospect of immortal glory warms the hearts of the living. “I should like,” said Napoleon, “to be my own posterity and to see how a great playwright like Corneille would make me feel, think, and speak.”

Vanity, saith the Preacher, all is vanity!

Napoleon remembered his Plutarch well. The conversation between Pyrrhus and Cineas was ever fresh in his mind. When Pyrrhus prepared to make war on Rome, his ambassador Cineas asked him what he would do after defeating the Romans. Conquer Italy, said Pyrrhus. And after that, what? Sicily. And then? Carthage. And when all this was done, and Greece subjugated as well, what then? Then, said Pyrrhus, “We will live at our ease and drink all day, and divert ourselves with pleasant conversation.” Then why, asked Cineas, go through so many troubles, if Pyrrhus could enjoy these pleasures at that very moment? Such reasonings, Plutarch informs us, disturbed Pyrrhus but in no way altered his purpose. Still, although like Pyrrhus Napoleon never wavered in his purpose to make conquests that would leave him no happier than he was when he started out, the vanity of such aimless purposefulness did not escape him. Nor, being a child of the eighteenth century, could he endure the notion of a man, be he ever so superior, seeking no other end than to magnify his ego. Glory without nobility of purpose was nothing. And thus, on his deathbed, the great cynic, the great opportunist concluded his political testament for the benefit of his son as follows: “No matter what he learns, he will profit little from it if in

his innermost heart he lacks that sacred flame, that love of the good which alone inspires great deeds."

Let us not be more cynical than Napoleon. Let us accept these words on trust.

III

This seems to be as far as it is possible to go in suggesting the unity of Napoleon's thought. As soon as one passes from the theme of destiny and self-fulfillment to more specific things, contradictions multiply and interpretations become hazardous. Indeed, the general method of his thought not only allows but even prescribes self-contradictions, lies, and posturings. These are spread for the reader to see in every part of this book. The reader can make of them what he pleases, but he should not judge Napoleon by them. Little men tell little lies, great men tell big ones. "It is an almost instinctive belief of mine," writes Stendhal, "that any man who holds power lies when he speaks, and especially when he writes." And Melville, with equal sagacity, remarks, "For be a man's intellectual superiority what it will, it can never assume the practical, available supremacy over other men, without the aid of some external arts and entrenchments, always, in themselves, more or less paltry and base."

Though not directly relevant here, the question might be asked with some profit: Why did Napoleon fail? "Because he bothered God," said Victor Hugo. That is one answer. Others point to this or that mistake or miscalculation, or declare that Napoleon bit off more than he could chew, or find some basic flaw in his system, or see him succumb to irresistible historic forces, or maintain that his people and allies let him down, or descry in his defeat the triumph of good over evil, or shrug their shoulders and speak of bad luck. Still others maintain that his rise was a historic

accident and that his downfall merely cut him down to size. Perhaps. If we accept as a premise the fact that he did fail, then all or any of these reasons may have been decisive. But did he fail?

As to military success, there can be no question of his ultimate failure. Yet Napoleon was singularly unconcerned with ultimate results. Just as Pyrrhus declared that after making all his conquests he would return home and live in merry comfort, so Napoleon persistently returned to the theme of what he would have done had he consolidated his empire and made peace. Democracy would have been established, along with liberty and social benefits—and so forth. No doubt such declarations were intended as propaganda for a possible return, but to some extent he seems to have believed in these chimeras. Pyrrhus might have answered Cineas, his Talleyrand, that if he followed his advice history would not speak of him—but probably he did not think it worth his while to argue the matter. Fear of oblivion was also Napoleon's motive, although some time before his downfall he rationalized this fear with the help of a political argument. "My power is dependent on my glory," he said, "and my glory on my victories....A newly established government must dazzle and astonish. The moment it ceases to glitter, it falls." This argument is highly debatable, but since it explains the inner compulsion that drives modern dictators to reckless adventure it should be ever-present in our minds as a warning.

The peaceful idyl visualized at the end of the long struggle is the grand illusion of restless doers. Even so, it is not for such idyls that the Pyrrhuses and Napoleons sacrifice their repose. In fact, they have no repose to sacrifice, since they are embodiments of the principles of energy and activity. But an activity that has only itself as its real and principal object cannot be judged by the criteria of success or failure. It is in this sense that Goethe must be understood when he spoke of Napoleon as a natural

phenomenon beyond the laws of men. This is also what Napoleon meant when he said: “I am a fragment of rock thrown into space.” It would make little sense to speak of successful or unsuccessful meteors, thunderstorms, or volcanoes. Still, as Napoleon pointed out, all men are the product of civilization; and, being a man, Napoleon paid tribute to civilization by entertaining a grand, humanitarian illusion. He might have dreamed of a Hitlerian nightmare instead; but since he was a product of the eighteenth century, he preferred to daydream of peace, happiness, and justice.

There was yet another reason, and perhaps a more significant one, for Napoleon’s material failure, and this was his essentially artistic temperament.

“Bonaparte was a poet in action,” said Chateaubriand. Similar remarks have been made on many men, and without elaboration they remain empty phrases. The defrauding bank teller who keeps a mistress and bets on horses may regard himself as a poet in action, too. Such ambiguities spring from the popular notion that it is defiance of law and convention which constitutes the artistic temperament. But the opposite is closer to the truth: the artist’s temperament is characterized by his dissatisfaction with the disorderly nature of the world such as he finds it. He creates his own world, with laws and conventions far more absolute than those of the world of men.

Napoleon made a remark on the fine arts that struck his contemporaries as ignorant but that to modern ears sounds almost axiomatic. What is so admirable in a painting or a piece of sculpture? he asked. “They all are mere copies from nature, and there is little merit in copying or imitating.” Indeed, we find that the world that Napoleon recreated in his own mind bears little resemblance to the “real” world. Paradoxically, the great realist, the scorner

of systems and metaphysical abstractions appears to have had a vision of the world that no realist could share. In his “romantic and epic dream”—the words are his—he created a hero to suit the needs of his imagination, a humanity to suit the needs of his hero, and a background to suit the magnitude of the action. Sir Hudson Lowe, no fool no matter what else he was, said that Bonaparte had created an imaginary Napoleon, an imaginary Europe, and, in the end, an imaginary Saint Helena. Few truer things have been said of Napoleon.

Leaving the hero till last, let us look at the humanity and at the background of Napoleon’s imaginary world. Men are raw material that can be manipulated; they “are like ciphers; they acquire their value merely from their position.” When properly employed by the hero, they are capable of great and noble deeds: “the inspired minority triumphs over the inert masses.” When opposing the hero’s designs, they are base, weak, and easily disposed of. Their aspirations, their opinions can by turns be exploited or ignored. Nations can be played off against one another, and alliances can be interchanged like articles of clothing. Selfishness and fear prevent men from concerting their actions against the hero. Since human nature in the aggregate does not change, the hero can continue to manipulate men and nations indefinitely. Such an estimate of men was necessary for the purposes of the hero, but it resulted in costly miscalculations. Men, it turned out, were less malleable than clay, less even than marble. This, however, did not disturb Napoleon—for reasons we shall presently try to make clear.

As for the background against which Napoleon saw himself, it was a unique vision. “Here nothing was of weight save earth and sea,” as Goethe put it. Napoleon’s imagination was in its element only when it roamed immensity. “Immensity,” in fact, was one of his favorite words. A pond in Moravia became an “immense lake” as he dictated a bulletin. “Vastness and

immensity can make you forget a great many defects." The desert fascinated him as a "symbol of immensity," as a "motionless ocean," and desert and ocean were the favorite objects of his contemplation. He used to like Ossian "for the same reason that I like the whisper of the wind and the waves of the sea." His very style achieved a romantic sort of poetry when shapeless vastness was its subject: "The soul was suspended between eternity, the ocean, and the night." The Moscow fire was "like immense waves of the sea, alternately bursting forth and lifting themselves to skies of fire, and then sinking into the ocean of flame below." Always the sea! An unfinished novel he undertook in his youth began with a storm at sea. Appropriately, he died during a storm in the middle of the Atlantic.

With this romantic and poetic backdrop, the action itself—politics and war—took on an essentially artistic character. In defining his conception of generalship in terms of a mathematical equation, Napoleon also defined the essence of artistic creation: "Now, this apportioning of knowledge and accident can take place only in the head of a genius, for without it there can be no creation—*and surely the greatest improvisation of the human mind is that which gives existence to the non-existent."*

The artist in politics and war was also an artist in power. "I too love power—but I love it as an artist. I love it as a musician loves his violin. I love it for the sake of drawing sounds, chords, and harmonies from it." The material source of his power was France. Of her he spoke as an artist of his Muse or a spendthrift of his rich mistress (there is little difference): "I have only one passion, only one mistress, and that is France: I sleep with her. She has never failed me....If I need five hundred thousand men, she gives them to me." There is something appalling in the egocentricity of artists.

We return to our starting point—the hero and the myth. For the chief

object of the artistic creation, the non-existent that had to be given existence, was, of course, the hero. As the Garden of Eden with its animals and fruits was created for Adam, so that world of immense potentiality, peopled by manageable humans, was created for the mythical Napoleon. The fact that men ultimately proved rebellious and that the career across limitless deserts and oceans ended in confinement on a rocky island—all this, as has been hinted, did not matter to him, for his true object had been accomplished. The myth had been given life, the non-existent called into existence, and nothing could shake it. The would-be destroyer of the myth "will be biting into granite....I shall survive—and whenever they want to strike a lofty attitude, they will praise me."

The myth rests not on fiction but on fact. "Arcole, Rivoli, the Pyramids, Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland—these are granite: the tooth of envy is powerless there." Yet even if these facts be hard enough to break a mastiff's teeth, they would be nothing in themselves. What vitality they have in the minds of men is owed to the vitality of the mind that made them possible—the furious mental energy and activity that accepted the challenge of every problem, roused or crushed the will of men, and fell short of its objective only because that objective was unlimited. Napoleon was the first to appreciate the mythological touch of his end, the Prometheus-like captivity on his rock; his very liver ailment was Promethean.

And the flesh was made word. A name, perhaps merely a symbolic representation of the name—a forelock, a hat, a pose—these by themselves in the imagination of men suggest the essence of what a thousand volumes of facts and appreciations cannot convey. Even the all-too-human weaknesses and vices in Napoleon's character—his awkwardness, his crudeness, his cynicism, his supposed incests—acquire the Olympian indifference of similar vices in Homer's gods and heroes. "To strike a lofty

attitude" one must, if not praise, at least admire him. To withhold admiration is petty and antipoetic. Except for a few pedants, said Napoleon, no one denied Alexander the Great's claim to divinity. Napoleon professed to admire Alexander's self-deification as a politic act; but in his heart he knew better. "Nothing great remains to be done," he complained in 1804; "...if I declared myself the son of the Eternal Father...every fishwife would hoot when she saw me pass by. The masses are too enlightened these days." But the masses are never too enlightened for a myth. "Napoleon is the Face of God in the darkness," wrote the pious Catholic Léon Bloy. And not a fishwife hooted, though Zeus may have smiled.

Paoli diagnosed Napoleon's anachronistic nature when he remarked to him, who was still an obscure lieutenant, "There is nothing modern in you; you are entirely out of Plutarch." It is true that Napoleon perfected several features of modern totalitarianism, economic warfare, mass propaganda, and other deplorable innovations: he marched with events, as he put it. But it is not from these things that his myth has sprung. He captured the imagination of those who harked back to—or looked forward to a return of—the gods and heroes of the ancient world. Alone among modern dictators he conquered mankind not by preaching systems and ideologies, not by speeches and demagoguery, not (though he used them) by tenor and secret police—but by the sheer magnetism of his personality, by the concentrated application of his mind, by the infectious boldness of his ventures.

Certain external and by no means accidental similarities between Napoleon's career and that of Hitler have blinded some men to the far more significant contrasts. Unlike Napoleon, Hitler is likely to go down in history as another Attila or Jenghiz Khan. Hitler destroyed the law; Napoleon was a lawgiver whose code spread across continents. That difference alone should be enough to discourage comparison. Hitler was a maniacal crank with an

ideology; Napoleon, sane and self-controlled, despised ideologies. Hitler appealed to hatred; Napoleon, to honor. Hitler extolled that dark, instinctual monster which he called the People and which Taine had called the Gorilla; Napoleon had seen that monster in action during the Reign of Terror, and he preferred to perish rather than invoke its power. Napoleon, when he began his career, embodied the hopes of sane and noble minds (not least among them Beethoven's); Hitler began and ended surrounded by a handful of psychopaths. But why insist on the contrast? Perhaps there is no difference between them but the difference between the Age of Reason and the Age of Hatred. It's a substantial difference.

Still, since great men have caused much breakage of late and since that breakage is becoming increasingly complete, the question has arisen in many men's minds whether the world would not gladly dispense with great men. Napoleon himself wondered about this. "The future will tell us whether it would not have been better if neither I nor Rousseau had ever lived," he said over Rousseau's grave. But as soon as we condemn great men, we condemn exceptional men. Without great men, we have only mediocre men, and if there had never been anything but mediocre men, we would still be half-apes. If Hitler is to be condemned merely because he was not a law-abiding citizen, content with making money, raising a family, owning a car, and living and letting live, then Hitler should not be condemned—or else a Galileo, a Mozart, or even a Gandhi would have to be condemned, too. Nor can Hitler be condemned as a great man, because he was not a great man. Things are not so simple, and men must be judged as individuals, not as members of categories according to the degree of their departure from a dubious norm. It is difficult to see how Hitler, as an individual, can be judged as anything but a diseased catalyst of a mass disease. Nothing positive appears on the ledger. Napoleon, on the other

hand, in his historic action left positive achievements behind him. Unlike Hitler, he left Europe not in ruins but brought up to date. Even where his genius failed his purpose, its nature was such that it cooperated willy-nilly with the constructive forces of history; the unification of Germany and of Italy, the spread of democratic liberalism may not have been in accord with his intentions, but they most certainly owed much to his action. And as a myth and a symbol he pushed back the limits of human capabilities. It may be a costly process for humanity to produce Napoleons, but if humanity should ever cease to produce them it would be a sign that its energies are exhausted. In order to turn its Napoleons to better enterprises than conquest and war, humanity first would have to turn away from war. To prove Napoleon wrong humanity must change.

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THE MIND OF NAPOLEON

THE HUMAN HEART

The human heart is an abyss that deceives all calculations. The most penetrating eyes cannot fathom it.

AN ESTIMATE OF MAN

{1} [Conversation, 1815, Saint Helena] You do not know men. They are difficult to understand if you want to be just. Do they know themselves, can they explain themselves to themselves? Most of those who have deserted me perhaps would, had my luck held out, never have suspected their defection. There are vices and virtues born of circumstance.

[Conversation, 1816] It is not true that “men never change.” They change for the worse—and even for the better. The same goes for many other maxims hallowed by writers, all equally false. “Men are ungrateful,” they say. No, it is not true that men are as ungrateful as they are said to be, and if there are many occasions for complaint, the usual reason is that the benefactor exacts still more than he gives.

Again, you are told that “knowledge of a man’s character is the key to his behavior.” This is false. A person may commit a crime who is basically an honest man; another inflicts cruelty without being cruel. The fact is that men almost never act in natural conformity to their characters but from a momentary secret passion that has taken refuge in the farthest recesses of the heart. Another error: you are told that “the face is the mirror of the soul.” The truth is that men are very difficult to know and that, to avoid mistakes, they must be judged only by their actions and, at that, by the action of the present moment, and only for that moment.

In fact, men have their virtues and their vices, their heroism, their perverseness. They are neither generally good nor generally bad, but they possess and exercise all that is good and all that is bad in this world. There you have the basic principle; its subsequent application operates through disposition, education, accidents. Outside this, all is theory, all is error.

{2} [Conversation, April 3, 1814] Those who suffer are unjust.

[Conversation, 1815, Saint Helena] Evil is always individual, almost never collective. Joseph's brothers cannot make up their minds to kill him. Judas, coldly hypocritical, cravenly calculating, hands his master to the executioner. A philosopher has asserted that men are born evil; it would be a lengthy business, and a very idle one, to investigate the truth of his saying. What is certain is this: that the mass of society is not wicked—for if a large majority wanted to be criminals and to defy the law, who would have the power to stop them or constrain them? It is precisely in this respect that civilization has triumphed, for indeed that happy result is due to the very nature of civilization. Most sentiments are traditions. We experience them because they have preceded us. Human reason, its development and that of our faculties—there you have the whole key to society, the whole secret of the lawgiver. Only those who want to deceive the masses and to govern for their own benefit could wish to maintain them in their ignorance; for the more enlightened the masses are, the more people will be convinced of the necessity of the laws and of the need to protect them, and the more settled, happy, and prosperous society will be. And if the enlightenment of the masses should ever do harm, this could happen only if the government, in opposition to the interest of the people, forced them to the wall or reduced the lowest class to misery and starvation, for then the more intelligent choice would lie in self-defense or crime.

{3} [From secondary source] The mass of men are weak, fickle because of their weakness, seek gain where they can, work for their own profit without wishing to harm others, and deserve to be pitied more than hated.

[Letter, 1793] The great majority of men attend to what is necessary only when they feel a need for it—the precise time when it is too late.

[Conversation, 1808] Men take only their needs into consideration—never their abilities.

[Conversation, 1816] If you wish to study men, learn how far their patience can stretch.

[Conversation, 1816] True character always pierces through in moments of crisis....There are sleepers whose awakening is terrifying.

[Conversation, 1816] All is convention among men, even those sentiments which would seem to derive directly from nature.

[Conversation, 1816] See what difference there is between the groping of men and the confident, frank pace of nature.

{4} [Conversation, 1800s] Men are moved by two levers only: fear and self-interest.

[Conseil d'état, c.1803] Men are guided by nothing else [than self-interest]. Those who say the contrary are hypocrites. Though young, I am old when it comes to the human heart. If I belong to a party, I am for my party; to an army, for my army; to a State, for my State. If I were black, I would be for the blacks; being white, I am for the whites. That’s the only truth. The opposite you may tell to children of eighteen.

[Conversation with his brother Lucien, 1807] All this, you see, is mere self-love (*amour-propre*), which in your own eyes you paint in the colors of

virtue—just as we sovereigns call policy everything that bears on our passions.

{5} [Repeated saying] I start out by believing the worst.

[Conversation, 1816] I defy anyone to trick me. Men would have to be exceptional rascals to be as bad as I assume them to be.

[Conversation, 1817, reported by Gourgaud] When I put it to him [Napoleon] that he considered mankind most perfidious, he answered: “I am not paid for finding it better.”

{6} [Conversation, c. 1804] People certainly are worthy of the contempt which they inspire in me! Look at my virtuous republicans: all I have to do is hang gold braid on their clothes and they are mine.

[Reported saying, on the old nobility] I offered them commissions in the army; they didn’t want them. I offered them posts in the administration; they turned them down. But I opened my antechambers to them, and they came running.

[Letter, 1808] The masses gladly take revenge for the honors they render us.

{7} [Conversation, 1803] Machiavelli is right: one always must live with one’s friends with the idea that they may turn into one’s enemies. He should have said, with everybody.

[Conversation, 1817] We attach ourselves more readily to those whom we have benefited than to our benefactors.

{8} [Conversation, 1800s] Men are like ciphers: they acquire their value merely from their position.

[Repeated saying] Be successful! I judge men only by the results of their

actions.

[Conversation, 1800s] Nobody is so stupid as not to be good for something.

{9} [Conversation, c. 1805, related by Mme de Rémusat] “I shall never understand,” I resumed, “that a person should risk his life for the sake of glory if inside he despises his contemporaries.” Here Bonaparte interrupted me sharply. “Madam, I do not despise men. You must never say such a thing, and I hold the French in particular esteem.”

I smiled at this brusque declaration, and as if he had guessed the cause of my smile, he too smiled and...pulling my ear...repeated to me: “Do you hear, Madam? You must never say that I despise the French.”

“THE ETERNAL I”

{10} [Letter to his brother Joseph, 1795] I need not tell you, my friend, that my only aim in life is to make my family happy

[Conversation, 1817] Bah! The main thing is one’s self.

{11} [Spoken to Josephine] You must submit to every one of my whims....To all your complaints I have the right to answer with an eternal “I.” I am apart from everybody, I accept no one’s conditions.

[Letter, 1806] My wife could have died in Munich or in Strasbourg and it would not have interfered for a quarter of an hour with the execution of my plans.

[To his small nephew, Louis Napoleon, in presence of the court, 1810] Remember always that, in whatever position my policy and the interests of my Empire may place you, your first duties are to me, your second duties to France; all your other duties, even those toward the nations that I may

entrust to you, come only in third place.

[Conversation, 1817] Isn't it true, Gourgaud, that it's a lucky thing to be selfish, unfeeling? If you were, you wouldn't worry about the fate of your mother or your sister, would you?

{12} [Letter, 1813] It is my fate that I should be betrayed again and again by the horrible ingratitude of the people to whom I have shown the most kindness.

ON FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE

{13} [Conversation, 1800s] Friendship is only a word. I love no one. No, not even my brothers. Joseph maybe, a little—at that, if I love him, it's by force of habit, because he's my older brother. Duroc, that's another thing—him, I also love. But why? I like his character. He's cold, hard, stem. And then, Duroc never weeps. As for me, it's all the same. I know I have no true friends. So long as I am what I am, I'll make myself as many apparent friends as I like. Look, Bourrienne, let the women whine, it's their business. But I? No sentimentality! One must be firm, have a firm heart....Otherwise one has no business mixing in war and government.

[Conversation, 1800s] It takes time to make oneself loved, and even when I had nothing to do I always vaguely felt that I had no time to waste.

{14} [Conversation, 1813] I don't care for Saint-Cloud, I don't care for the Tuileries. You could burn all that and it would make no difference to me. My houses are nothing to me; women are nothing to me; my son, just a little. I leave one place, I go to another. When I left Saint-Cloud and went to Moscow, it wasn't because I liked to or for the sake of my friends, but by rigid calculation.

The four quotations following all come from conversations with General

Gourgaud.

{15} [1816] I like only those who make war.

[1817] What do I care how people feel about me, so long as they show me a friendly face! I can only hear words, I don’t read people’s hearts.

[1818] You ought to realize that you shouldn’t bore me with your frankness. Keep it to yourself. I tell you once more, I pay attention only to what people say, not to what they think.

[1818] All being said, I like only those people who are useful to me, and only so long as they are useful.

{16} [Conversation, Saint Helena] I do not believe that it is in our nature to divide our love. It is a mistake to believe that one can equally love two beings, even one’s children. There always is a dominant affection. Now, if I like somebody and honor him with my trust, I want to be the object of his dominant affection. I don’t want to share, do you understand?

{17} [Conversation, early 1800s] I always have loved to analyze, and if I ever fell seriously in love I would take my love apart piece by piece.

[Conversation, 1815] Love should be a pleasure, not a torment.

{18} [Manuscript, 1791] The ivy clings to the first tree it meets. This, in a few words, is the story of love....

A man is in a foreign country, without relatives, away from his home: you may be sure he needs an attachment, a support, a feeling that takes the place of his brother, his father [blank space in manuscript]. Love comes to his rescue and offers him those advantages....Well, what is love? The consciousness of his own weakness that is never long in taking hold of a solitary or isolated man—the feeling that he is at the same time powerless

and immortal. His soul contracts, expands, gathers strength; delightful and voluptuous tears begin to flow, and love is there!

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The gentle emotions of love, Cupid's treacherous arrows, are poisoned, it is said, but we take pleasure in pain, we do not want to be cured. Indeed, having tasted the sensations, the drunkenness of love, we dread the horrible solitude of the heart, the emptiness of feeling.

[Manuscript, "Dialogue on Love," before 1793] *Des Mazis:* What do you mean, sir, by "What is love?" Are you not made like other men?

Bonaparte: I do not ask you for the definition of love. I was in love once, and I remember it well enough not to require those metaphysical definitions that merely confuse matters. I do more than deny its existence. I believe it to be harmful to society, to individual happiness—in short, I believe that...it would be the merciful deed of a protective divinity to rid us of love and to liberate the world from it.

{19} [Conversation, c. 1805] Josephine is always afraid I might seriously fall in love. It seems she doesn't know that love is not made for me. Indeed, what is love? A passion that puts the whole universe to one side in order to see nothing, to allow nothing on the other side but the object of one's love. And surely it isn't in my nature to let myself go to such exclusiveness. Then why is she concerned over pastimes that do not in the least engage my feelings?

[Letter to Josephine, Tilsit, July 8, 1807] The queen of Prussia is really charming and full of coquettishness toward me. But don't be jealous: I am made of oilcloth, and all this just slides off. It would cost me too dearly to play the gallant.

[Conversation with Lucien, December 1807] It makes you laugh to see me in love.{20} Yes, I am indeed in love, but always subordinately to my policy, which requires me to marry a princess, although I should prefer to have my mistress crowned.

[Conversation, 1817] I have never loved, really loved, except, perhaps, Josephine—a little—and at that, because I was twenty-seven when I met her. I liked Marie Louise a great deal. I rather agree with Gassion, who said that he did not love life enough to give it to other beings.

COLLOQUY WITH A STREETWALKER

{21} [Notebook, November 22, 1787] I had just left the Théâtre des Italiens and with long strides was pacing up and down the paths of the Palais-Royal. My soul, stirred by the vigorous emotions that characterize it, made me indifferent to the cold. But my imagination had cooled down; I began to feel the rigor of the season and made for the arcades. I was on the threshold of those iron gates when my eyes strayed toward a female person. The time of day, her figure, her extreme youth left me no doubt that she was a streetwalker. I watched her. She stopped, not with the air of a veteran but with an air that agreed perfectly with her exterior. This correspondence struck me, and I spoke to her. I spoke to her—I who, more deeply impressed than anyone with the odiousness of her profession, have always considered myself soiled by a single look! But her pallor, her frailness, her soft voice kept me from hesitating even for an instant. “Either she is a person who will be useful to the study I want to make,” I told myself, “or else she is a goose.”

“You must be very cold,” I said to her. “How could you muster the courage to go into the garden?”

“Ah, sir, hope keeps me going. I must finish the evening’s work.” The

indifference with which she uttered these words, the lethargy of that reply won me, and I walked on with her.

“You look as if you had a weak constitution. I am surprised you are not tired of the profession.”

“Ah well, sir, one has to do something.”

“That may be, but isn’t there any profession that is better for your health?”

“No, sir, one has got to live.”

I was enchanted. I saw that at least she was responsive, and in all my previous attempts I had never scored that success.

“You must come from some northern province, since you defy the cold.”

“I come from Nantes in Brittany.”

I know that country. You must, Mademoiselle, do me the favor of telling me how you lost your virginity.”

“An officer took it from me.”

“Do you regret it?”

“Oh yes, you may believe me.” (Her voice took on a savor, an unctuousness that I had not yet noticed.) “You may believe me. My sister is well married now. Why shouldn’t I have been too?”

“How did you come to Paris?”

“The officer who dishonored me, whom I hate, abandoned me. I had to flee my mother’s indignation. Another turned up, brought me to Paris, and left me. A third one, with whom I have lived for three years, succeeded him. He is a Frenchman, but his business called him to London, and he is there

now. Let’s go to your place.”

“But what shall we do there?”

“Let’s go. We will warm ourselves and you will take your fill of pleasure.”

This was no time for scruples. Lest she run away when faced with the arguments I had prepared for her, I led her on by feigning a gallantry which I intended to prove to her I lacked.

A CASE OF ROMANTIC LOVE

{22} [Conversation, 1816] I never saw a passion like that of Berthier for Mme Visconti. In Egypt, he would watch the moon at the same hour that she was supposed to look at it herself. In the middle of the desert, he put up a tent for her cult: he put Mme Visconti’s portrait inside it and burned incense there. Three mules were used to transport this tent and his baggage. Often I would enter and lie down on the sofa with my boots on. It made Berthier furious; he thought it was a profanation of the sanctuary. He loved her so much that he provoked me into talking about her, although I always spoke ill of her. He didn’t care, he was delighted if one talked about her at all. He even wanted to leave the army to go back to her. I had my dispatches all ready, received his parting wishes, assigned him a dispatch boat, when he came back to me with tears in his eyes. If I had left him in command in Egypt, he would have evacuated it right away. After the battle of Marengo he made out a report in which Soprani was cited five times. Soprani was Mme Visconti’s son, a brat of sixteen, and Berthier gave him credit for the victory! “Soprani did this, Soprani did that,” he wrote, and all this to please Mme Visconti. In Italy I once gave him a diamond worth a hundred thousand francs; right away he sent it to Mme Visconti. Two months after his marriage with the princess of Bavaria—which was arranged by

Monsieur Visconti—he came to see me. “He’s dead,” he said.—”‘Well, who?—Her husband!—”I’m asking you, who?”—”Monsieur Visconti! I have missed my chance of happiness! Why did I get married!” And more nonsense of that sort.

ON WOMEN

{23} [Letter, Paris, 1795] The women are everywhere—plays, public walks, libraries. You can see very pretty women in the scholar’s study room. Only here, of all places on earth, do women deserve to wield such influence, and indeed the men are mad about them, think of nothing else, and live only through and for them. A woman, in order to know what is due her and what power she has, must live in Paris for six months.

When Napoleon became First Consul, he sought to change this state of affairs. His hatred of intellectual and independent women found its ideal mark in Mme de Staël, the most celebrated woman of his time. His favorite method of deflating a woman’s superiority was studied brusqueness. A fine sample of his technique is shown in the following anecdote.

{24} [At a reception, c. 1800] Followed by his brother Lucien, Bonaparte stopped in front of Mme de Staël, scrutinized her décolleté, and said brusquely, “No doubt you have nursed your children yourself?” Mme de Staël was struck dumb, petrified. Here was a question she had not anticipated. As for Bonaparte, he walked on, saying to Lucien, “You see? She doesn’t even want to say yes or no.”

The following conversation took place during a dinner party at Talleyrand’s house in 1799.

Mme de Staël: What woman, dead or alive, do you consider to be the greatest?

Bonaparte: The one who has had the most children.

[Conversation, 1817] Women receive too much consideration in France. They should not be regarded as the equals of men; they are, in fact, mere machines to make children.

{25} [Conversation, c.1803, about Mme de Staël's novel *Delphine*, which poses the problem of equality between the sexes] I don't like masculine women any more than effeminate men. Everybody should play his own part in this world. What's the meaning of all this gypsying of the imagination? What remains of it? Nothing. All this is sentimental metaphysics, intellectual disorder.

[Anecdote related by Mme de Staël] One day I saw him approach a Frenchwoman who was celebrated for her beauty, wit, and liveliness of opinion. He placed himself directly facing her, like the stiffest of German generals, and said, "Madam, I don't like women to mix in politics." "You are right, general," she replied, "but in a country where women have their heads cut off, it is only natural that they should like to know why." Bonaparte answered nothing. He is a man whom true resistance appeases. Those who have borne his despotism are equally as guilty as he.

[Conversation, 1817] I also repent not having talked more with the ladies. I would have learned a great many things from them that men did not dare tell me. Women, as a matter of fact, have an independence all their own.

{26} [Letter to Josephine, 1806] I have received your letter, in which you seem angry because I speak ill of women. It is true that I hate scheming women worse than anything. I am used to women who are good, gentle, and conciliating; they are the ones I like. If I have been spoiled, it is not my fault but yours.

[Conversation, 1817, related by Gourgaud] His Majesty went to bed and declared that he preferred blondes to brunettes. “That was the only reason why I liked Mme Grassini;{27} indeed, after I had received her visits once or twice, I didn’t desire her any longer. When I heard that Marie Louise was a blonde, I was very pleased.”

[Conversation, 1817] In Vienna, in 1805, Murat said to me, “I want you to meet a charming woman who is mad about you and wants nothing but you.” Although I had my misgivings, I told him to bring her along. She didn’t speak a word of French, and I not a word of German. I liked her so much that I spent the whole night with her. She was one of the most agreeable women I’ve ever met—no smell. In the morning, she waked me up, and I have never seen her since. I never knew who she was.

{28} [Conversation, 1815] Nothing is more imperious, my dear Las Cases, than weakness when it knows itself backed by strength: look at women.

[Conversation, 1817, reported in English] Women, when they are bad, are worse than men, and more ready to commit crimes. The soft sex, when degraded, falls lower than the other. Women are always much better or much worse than men.

[Conversation, 1817] One sex must submit to the other. Women have been known to go to war like soldiers, and then they are brave, susceptible of great excitement, and capable of committing the worst atrocities....If war broke out between men and women, it would be quite a different business from the struggles we have seen between nobles and the people, or whites and blacks.

[Conversation, 1817] I can more easily conceive of incest between father and daughter than between son and mother. In the one case, it is the man who commands; in the other, he must obey his mother.

“I LIKE MY WIFE”

One day, when Mme de Staël accused him of not liking women, Napoleon replied drily, “I like my wife.” And, when all is said and done, there can be little doubt that his attachment to Josephine was the closest he ever came to love.

{29} [Letter to Carnot, Milan, May 1796(?)] I am desperate: my wife is not coming—she has some lover who keeps her in Paris. I curse all women, but I gladly embrace my good friends.

[Letter to Josephine, July 17, 1796] I thought I loved you a few days ago, but since I saw you, I feel I love you a thousand times more. This proves that La Bruyère’s maxim, that love comes suddenly, is false. Everything in nature has its development and successive phases of growth.

[Letter to Josephine, November 28, 1796] When I demand from you a love equal to mine, I am wrong. Why should lace be as heavy as gold?

{30} [Conversation, 1805] Look here, Bourrienne, you must promise to do me a favor before I leave for Italy. You see my wife once in a while; that’s all right and as it should be—you have been a member of the household for too long not to keep up your visits. Go and see her; try once more to make her see reason about her mad expenditures. Every day I discover new ones: it drives me to despair. When I talk to her about it, I become angry, I make a scene, she cries, I forgive her, I pay, she makes fine promises, and the next day it’s the same as before, and everything starts all over again.

[Conversation, 1817] Josephine was at that time one of the most agreeable women, full of graceful charm, but a woman in the fullest meaning of the term. Her first reaction always was to say no, to gain time to think. Then she’d say, “Oh yes, sir!” She lied almost continually, but

cleverly. I may say she was the woman I have loved the most.

{31} [On his deathbed, April 26, 1821; reported by Montholon] The Emperor spent a relatively calm night until four o'clock in the morning. Then he said, with extraordinary emotion: “I have just seen my good Josephine, but she didn’t want to kiss me. She slipped away the moment I wanted to take her in my arms. She was sitting there; it was as if I had last seen her only the night before. She hadn’t changed—always the same, still completely devoted to me. She told me we were going to see each other again and never again leave each other. She has promised me—Did you see her?”

EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

{32} [Note on the state school for girls at Ecouen, 1807] What should be taught the young ladies who will be brought up at Ecouen? First of all, religion in all its severity. In this respect you must be uncompromising. Religion is an important business in a public institution for young ladies. It is, no matter what has been said, the strongest safeguard for mothers and husbands. You must form believers, not reasoners. The weakness of women’s brains, the mobility of their ideas, their destination in the social order, the necessity of constant and perpetual resignation and of a kind of indulgent and facile charitableness—all this can be obtained [*sic!*] only through religion, a charitable and gentle religion....

Second, the pupils must be taught arithmetic, writing, and the rudiments of their language, so that they learn to spell correctly. They should be taught a little geography and history, but absolutely no Latin or foreign languages. The oldest ones may be taught a little botany and may be given a superficial course of physics or natural history, and at that there may be disadvantageous results. In physics, the teachers should limit themselves to

the minimum needed to prevent gross ignorance and stupid superstition, and keep strictly to facts, without reasonings that bear directly or indirectly on first causes.

You will study the question whether it is convenient to give those who have reached a certain grade an allowance for their clothes. They might get used to economy, calculate the value of things, and make their own budgets.

In general, however, they should be kept busy, for three quarters of the year, at manual tasks. They should know how to knit stockings, make shirts, embroider, in a word, all sorts of feminine handiwork....

I do not know if there is a possibility of teaching them a little medicine and pharmacy—at least, the kind of medicine a sick-nurse ought to know. It would also be good if they had some acquaintance with that part of the kitchen that is called the pantry. I should like a young girl, when she leaves Ecouen to take her place at the head of a small household, to be able to make her own dresses, to mend her husband’s clothes, to make her children’s layettes...to nurse her husband and children when they are ill....

I dare not prescribe, as I did at Fontainebleau [a military school for boys], that the pupils should-learn cookery. I would have too many people against me. But the girls could be told to prepare their own desserts and whatever else may be given them either for their afternoon snack or their holidays. I dispense them from cooking, but not from making their own bread. The advantage of this is that they acquire practice in everything they may be called upon to do and that their time is naturally employed in practical and useful things.

Their rooms should be furnished by the work of their own hands. They should make their own underclothes, stockings, dresses, caps. All this is extremely important, in my opinion. I want these young girls to turn into

useful women, convinced as I am that thus they will be agreeable women. I do not want to try to make agreeable women out of them, because they would merely turn into coquettes. Women who make their own dresses know how to dress tastefully.

Dancing is necessary to the health of the pupils, but it should be a jolly sort of dancing and none of your opera ballets. I shall also grant them music lessons, but vocal music only.

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In this matter it is necessary to stop only short of ridicule. I am bringing up neither fashion plates nor chambermaids, not housekeepers but women destined for modest and poor households. In a poor household, the mother is the housekeeper.

With the single exception of the headmaster, men must be excluded from this establishment. None must ever enter its precincts under any pretext. Even the gardening must be done by women. It is my intention that, in this respect, the establishment at Ecouen should be as strictly regulated as a religious convent. Even the headmaster’s wife must not receive men except in the parlor. If, in the case of grave illness, it becomes imperative to admit the relatives, they can be admitted only with the permission of the grand chancellor of the Legion of Honor.

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It would be...superfluous to add that nothing is more ill-considered and blameworthy than to make the girls stage theatrical performances and to excite competition among them by grade distinctions. That is good for boys, who may be called upon to speak in public and who, being obliged to learn many things, need the support and stimulus of competition. But as for young girls, there must be no competition among them. Their passions must

not be awakened, nor must vanity, the most active passion of the sex, be aroused. Mild punishments, and praise from the headmistress for those who conduct themselves well, seem sufficient to me. But grading them by means of ribbons does not seem to me to produce desirable results if it has any other objective than to distinguish age groups and if it establishes a sort of hierarchy.

ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

The remarks below were made by the First Consul during the discussions of the Civil Code by the Conseil d'état in 1802-3.

{33} Marriage should be forbidden to individuals who have known each other for less than six months.

Portalis:...Man is sociable, and marriage is ordered by nature.

The First Consul: I deny that! Marriage is not derived from nature but from society and its mores. The Oriental family is altogether different from the Occidental one. The former comprises several wives and concubines; this seems immoral, but it works. The laws have provided for it. I do not adopt the opinion that the family is derived from civil law, and civil law from natural law. The Romans had different ideas on the family; its organization is based on the mores.

The official performing a civil marriage requires a formula containing the promise of obedience and fidelity on the part of the wife. She must be made to realize that on leaving the tutelage of her family she passes under that of her husband. The civil official performs the marriage without any solemnity—that is too colorless. Something more is needed. Look at the priests: they had a sermon. Even if the newlyweds didn’t listen, being occupied by other thoughts, the congregation did.

Is it true that the indissolubility of marriage is absolute?

Marriage is indissoluble in the sense that, once it has been contracted, both parties must have the firm intention never to terminate it, and they must not at that point foresee the accidental and sometimes criminal causes that later may necessitate its dissolution. But the idea that the indissolubility of marriage can in no case be subject to exceptions is a belief that has been belied by the maxims and practices of every century. It is contrary to the natural order that two beings, two separate organisms, should ever form a perfect identity. Now, the legislator must foresee the results that the nature of things may bring to pass. Thus the fiction of the identity of husband and wife has always been qualified—by the Catholic Church in case of impotence, and everywhere by divorce.

{34} [Conseil d'État, c. 1802] [Marriage is] a mutual exchange of souls, of perspiration.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] He and Josephine, said the Emperor, had been a completely bourgeois couple, that is to say, very affectionate and united, having for a long time shared the same room and bed. "A very moral habit," he said, "and one that exerts a singular influence on married life, guarantees the position of the wife, the dependence of the husband, and preserves intimacy and morality. Somehow a couple does not lose sight of one another when they spend the night together. Otherwise they become soon estranged."

{35} [Letter to Murat, 1801] A soldier should remain faithful to his wife but should not wish to see her again until the authorities decide that he has nothing else to do.

[Letter to Josephine, Warsaw, January 1807] I laughed at what you wrote to me—that you have taken a husband in order to be with him. In my

ignorance, I thought that the wife was made for the husband, the husband for the fatherland, family, and glory. Excuse my ignorance. One always learns something new from our fine ladies.

[Letter to Josephine, Willenberg, February 1, 1807] You say that your glory consists in your happiness. This is ungenerous; you must say, my glory consists in the happiness of others. It is not wifely; you must say, my glory consists in my husband's happiness. It is not motherly; you should say, my glory consists in my children's happiness. Now, since neither the people, nor your husband, nor your children can be happy without a little glory, you must not despise it. Josephine, you have an excellent heart and a weak head. You feel most excellently, but you reason less well.

{36} [Conseil d'état, c.1803] The husband must possess the absolute power and right to say to his wife: "Madam, you shall not go out, you shall not go to the theater, you shall not receive such and such a person; for the children you will bear shall be mine."

[Letter to his brother Louis, king of Holland, 1807] Your quarrels with the queen [Hortense Beauharnais] have reached the public. I advise you to cultivate in private life that paternal and pliant character you display in your government and to apply to public business the severity you show in your household. You are treating a young wife the way one leads a regiment....

You have the best wife and the most virtuous, and you make her unhappy. Let her go dancing as much as she likes—she is young. I have a wife who is forty. From the battlefield I write to her to go to the ball; and you want a woman of twenty, who sees life slipping by, who still is full of illusions, to live now like a nun, now like a wet nurse, always bathing her child? You are too much yourself in your family, too little in your administration. I should not tell you that if I were not concerned for you.

Make the mother of your children happy. There is but one way, namely to show her much respect and trust. Unfortunately, your wife is too virtuous: if you had married a flirt, she would lead you by the nose.

{37} [Conseil d'état, 1802] Adultery on the husband’s part should not be sufficient ground for divorce, unless there is the additional circumstance of the husband’s keeping his concubine under the same roof as his wife.

[Conseil d'état, c.1803] Adultery, which in the Civil Code is a tremendous word, is in fact a mere peccadillo, an incident at a masked ball....Adultery is nothing extraordinary—it’s a transaction on a sofa, a most common occurrence.

[Conversation, 1817] I find it ridiculous that a man should not be able to have more than one legitimate wife. When she is pregnant, it’s as if he had no wife. People don’t have concubines any longer, to be sure, but they have mistresses, who cost them a great deal more. I am speaking of well-to-do people, because the poor could never feed more than one wife.

{38} [Conseil d'état, 1802] While the stability of marriages serves the interests of social morality, those interests perhaps also demand the separation of a husband and wife who cannot live together and whose union, if prolonged, is often likely to dissipate the common patrimony, break up the family, and result in desertion of the children. To allow such ties to subsist is an offense against the sanctity of marriage.

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It has been argued that divorce on grounds of incompatibility is contrary to the interests of wives, children, and the family spirit. But nothing is more radically opposed to the interests of a married couple, if their temperaments are incompatible, than to reduce them to the alternative of either living together or separating in open scandal [i.e., in a public trial for adultery].

Nothing is more contrary to the family spirit than a disunited family.

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[In case of adultery,] in order not to bring disrepute on each other, the married parties will sue merely on the ground of cruelty and will declare themselves in agreement on desiring divorce. The public will notice nothing of the cause. If subsequently a few people suspect or guess at the more real cause, this will be merely one of those rumors that pass and cannot be compared to the damage that a reputation suffers from judicial proof.

ON CHILDREN

{39} [Letter to his brother Jérôme, 1807, on the death of their nephew Napoleon, son of King Louis of Holland and Hortense Beauharnais] My brother, Napoleon died at The Hague after three days' illness. I do not know if the king has notified you. This event saddens me all the more because his father and mother are unreasonable and have abandoned themselves, indulging their grief to the full.

[To Josephine, on the same occasion] Hortense is unreasonable. She does not deserve to be loved, since she loved nothing but her children.

[Conversation, 1817, related by Gourgaud] His Majesty then talked about women and children. Past the age of three or four, he no longer likes children. Every family should have six: three of them die, and of the three remaining two are there to replace their parents, the third in case of an accident.

{40} [A visit to the Murats, c. 1805; related by Lucien Bonaparte] One day, when this child [Achille Murat] was not yet four years old, his uncle the First Consul having pulled his ears so roughly that the child cried out, the Consul pulled them again and even harder. This sent Achille, whose

mother was present as well as myself, into a fit of rage so vehement as to belie his years. Indeed, stamping his feet and almost gnashing his teeth, he advanced, his clenched fists raised, faced the First Consul, and said, stammering with rage as much as from inability to express himself more articulately..."You are a bad man, naughty, bad, bad!" This in turn excited the First Consul's rage—rather inappropriately, in my opinion—and he struck little Achille so hard a blow on the cheek that the boy came staggering and stumbling to find protection in my arms, while his mother, extremely upset by the scene, fell into a faint....The First Consul for his part left the place, shrugging his shoulders and banging the door, saying that Caroline had always been a simpering fool, that this was how parents spoiled their children, and that as far as he was concerned, if ever he had any, he would not spoil them.

{41} [Letter to Josephine, 1811] My son is plump and in good health. I hope he will make out well. He has my chest, my mouth, and my eyes. I hope he will fulfill his destiny.

[Anecdote, told by Mme de Rémusat] One day, when Napoleon was at breakfast, to which he had admitted Talma, as he frequently did, little Napoleon [the king of Rome] was brought in. The Emperor sat him on his knee and, far from fondling him, amused himself by striking him—though, truth to tell, very gently. Then, turning to Talma, "Talma," said he, "tell me what I am doing." Talma, as may be imagined, was rather at a loss for an answer. "Don't you see?" the Emperor went on, "I am spanking a king!"

[Letter to the governess of the king of Rome, 1813] I just received your letter and that of the king, dated August 9. I find that the king writes very good poetry, and especially poetry that expresses genuine feeling. I rely on the Empress to give him toys. [N.B.: The king was two and a half years

old.]

“AM I UNNATURAL?”

{42} [From Gourgaud’s diary, on his birthday, December 22, 1815] I am sad; it is raining. The English are drilling near Plantation House. The Emperor speaks to me of my mother. “You are mad to love your mother so much. Do you believe I don’t love mine? But one must be reasonable. To everybody his turn. How old is she?”—”Seventy years, Sire.”—”You bet you won’t see her again. She’ll die before you return to France.” I began to cry.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] The Emperor stayed in his room all morning and, by way of various subjects, came to speak of sentiment, sensations, sensibility. Citing the example of one among us who never pronounced his mother’s name without tears in his eyes, he said:

“But isn’t this peculiar to him? Or could this be a general phenomenon? Are you like that, too, or am I unnatural? As for me, I certainly love my mother, and with all my heart. There is nothing I wouldn’t do for her—and yet, if I were informed of her death, I don’t think I could express my grief with a single tear. And I could not say that it would be the same thing if I lost a friend, my wife, or my son. What motivates such behavior? Could it be that my reason has accustomed me in advance to the loss of my mother, which is in the natural order of things, while the loss of my wife or child would be a surprise, a cruelty of fate against which I should try to rebel? But then, perhaps, it is merely a natural bent toward selfishness? I belong to my mother; wife and child belong to me.”

THE PASSING OF A FRIEND

Napoleon’s assertion concerning the grief he felt at the loss of friends

may be tested by his reaction to the death in 1813 of Duroc—the man whom by his own testimony he loved most.

{43} [Duroc on Napoleon, to Bourrienne, 1813] What distresses me most, I confess, is how little he regrets his old comrades in arms. He says, in solemn tones, “Such a one has died a hero’s death.” Then, the next moment, he doesn’t give it another thought.

[Bulletin dictated by Napoleon, Görlitz, May 24, 1813] As soon as the outposts were in position and the army had occupied the bivouac area, the Emperor went to see the duke of Frioul [i.e., Duroc], He found him fully conscious and displaying extraordinary sang-froid. The duke pressed the Emperor’s hand and brought it to his lips. “All my life,” he said, “has been devoted to your service, and I regret its loss only because of the usefulness it still might have had for you.”—”Duroc,” said the Emperor, “there is another life. It is there you will go and wait for me and we shall meet again one day.”—”Yes, Sire, but that will be thirty years from now, when you shall have triumphed over your enemies and fulfilled all the hopes of the fatherland. I have lived an honest life; I have no regrets. I am leaving a daughter: Your Majesty shall take her father’s place.”

The Emperor, pressing the grand marshal’s right hand, remained for a quarter of an hour, resting his forehead on his left, in absolute silence. The grand marshal was the first to break the silence. “Ah, Sire, leave me; this sight causes you too much pain!” The Emperor, supported by the duke of Dalmatia and the duke of Vicenza, left the duke of Frioul, unable to say anything but, “Farewell, then, my friend!” His Majesty returned to his tent and received no one all night.

[From Bourrienne’s memoirs] An eye witness...wrote to...his friend not to give any credence to the official account of Napoleon’s visit to Duroc. He

added that Duroc, who was in severe pain, seeing that the visit was dragging on, turned over painfully to rest on his left side and with the right hand gestured to him to go away. “Ah, Sire, let me at least die in peace!”

[Letter, June 7, 1813] The death of the duke of Frioul has grieved me. In twenty years, this was the only time that he had not known how to please me.

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QUESTIONS OF LIFE, DESTINY, AND GREATNESS

I often used to amuse myself at daydreaming, in order afterwards to measure my dreams with the calipers of reason.

I should like to be my own posterity and see how a great playwright like Corneille would make me feel, think, and speak.

ON MAN, NATURE, AND GOD

{44} [Letter to Josephine, 1796] What is the future? What the past? What are we? What is this magic fluid that envelops us and hides from us what most we need to know? We are born, we live, we die surrounded by wonder.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] We were talking of dreams, presentiments, clairvoyance, and of what the English call second sight....The Emperor ended up by saying: “...All this might be, but it is not. Man,” he said, “loves the marvelous. It has for him an irresistible attraction; he is always ready to leave the marvels that surround him to run after invented ones. He is eager to be deceived. The truth is that everything around us is miracle. There is no such thing as a prodigy in the proper sense: everything in nature is prodigious. The wood in my fireplace that gives me warmth is a prodigy; this lamp that gives me light is a prodigy; all first causes, my intelligence, my faculties, are prodigies. For all this *is*, and we cannot define it. I leave you here,” he continued, “and now I am in Paris, about to enter the Opéra; I greet the audience; I hear their acclaim; I see the actors, hear the music. Now, if I can leap across all the distance from Saint Helena, why shouldn’t I be able to leap across the distances of centuries? Why can’t I see the future as well as the past? Is the one thing more extraordinary, more miraculous than the other? No. Only, it happens not to be possible. There you have the unanswerable argument that will

infallibly destroy all these imaginary marvels.”

{45} [Manuscript, 1791] How I should pity him who cannot understand, nor ever has been moved, by the electricity of nature!

[Conversation, 1817] What is electricity, galvanism, magnetism? There lies the great secret of nature. Galvanic forces work in silence.

{46} [Conversation, 1816, reported in English] There is a link between animals and the Deity. Man is merely a more perfect animal than the rest. He reasons better. But how do we know that animals have not a language of their own? My opinion is that it is presumption in us to say no, because we do not understand them. A horse has memory, knowledge, and love....Who can deny the sagacity of dogs? There is a link between all animals. Plants are so many animals which eat and drink, and there are gradations up to man, who is only the most perfect of them all. The same spirit animates them all in a greater or lesser degree.

[Conversation, 1817] I believe that man is the product of the earth’s ooze, heated by the sun and combined with electric fluids. What are the animals, an ox, for instance, if not organic matter? Well, when you consider that we are constituted more or less the same, isn’t it reasonable to believe that man is merely more perfectly organized matter—matter near its state of perfection? Perhaps some day there will come beings whose matter will be still more perfectly organized?

[Conversation, 1819] To absorb, to emit, to form new combinations—this is life.

{47} [Conversation, 1816] Man, thrown into life, asks himself, “Whence do I come? Who am I? Where am I going?” Such are the mysterious questions that impel us toward religion. We rush toward it, we are naturally

inclined to it—but then comes information and stops us. Information and history, these are the great enemies of true religion, disfigured as it is by human imperfection. We ask ourselves, Why is not the religion of Paris the same as that of London or Berlin? Why is it different in Petersburg and in Constantinople? Why does that of Constantinople differ from those of Persia, Hindustan, and China? Why ancient religion from modern? Then reason contracts in pain and cries out: “Religions, religions! O children born of man!” One believes in God because everything around us proclaims him, because the greatest minds believed in him—not only Bossuet, for after all this was his job, but even Newton, Leibniz, who had no business believing. But one doesn’t know what to make of the doctrine such as it is taught us, and we end up with the conclusion that we are the watch that goes without knowing the watchmaker....[As a child] I felt the need to believe, and I believed. But as soon as I began to know, to reason, my faith was jarred and uncertain. And this happened to me when I was no older than thirteen. Perhaps one day I shall regain blind faith—please God I may! I certainly don’t resist faith, I demand nothing better. I imagine that it must give a great and true happiness.

However, I affirm that in the great storms, even when I accidentally produced the impression of immorality, the absence of religious faith has never influenced me in any way whatever, and I have never doubted God. For if my reason did not suffice to understand him, yet my inner feeling accepted him. My nerves were in sympathy with that feeling.

[Conversation, 1816] I am the watch that is and does not know itself.

[Conversation, 1817] Show a watch to a savage, and he will think it has a soul.

[Conversation, 1821, three weeks before his death] Wanting to be an

atheist does not make you one.

ON RELIGIONS

{48} [Manuscript, 1791] There are truths that feeling alone can demonstrate. We shall call them “felt truths.” There are truths that pure logic can prove, such as mathematical truths.

In the moral sciences, a felt truth, if developed by a natural logic, produces a rational result or a series of truths that perfect society and legislation and prescribe rules of conduct: thus were born the dialogues of Plato, the *Social Contract,* the *Essay on Human Understanding.*

In the moral sciences, a logically demonstrable truth, even if developed by a sound logic, produces a series of deductions that ordinarily are mere sophistry and error. This explains how, despite its sound logic, scholasticism has created theology, that sink of prejudices and errors of all kinds.

[Address to the parish priests of Milan, 1800] I too am a philosopher, and I know that no matter what society a man lives in, he cannot be regarded as virtuous and righteous if he does not know whence he comes and where he goes. Mere reason cannot give us certainty on this. Without religion, we walk in continuous darkness, and the Catholic religion is the only one that gives man certain and infallible knowledge of his origin and ultimate purpose. No society can exist without morality; there is no sound morality without religion; thus only religion gives the state firm and lasting support.

[Conversation, 1817] *Napoleon:* If a man thinks, it is because his nature is more perfect than that of a fish. When my digestion is bad, I think differently from when I’m well. Everything is matter. Besides, if I had believed in a God who rewards and punishes, I would have been timid in

war....

Gourgaud: But, Sire, without religion, who prevents secret crimes?

Napoleon: Bah! The law, that's what makes men stay honest. Morality for the upper classes, the gallows for the rabble. Who keeps me from marrying my sister? Morality. And what if it's on a desert island?...Bah, Monsieur Gourgaud, do you believe, then, that the Intelligence that regulates the motions of the stars—an Intelligence which is merely a property of matter—do you believe that it watches over men's actions and keeps an account of them?

Gourgaud: Sire, I believe in God, and I should be most unhappy if I were an atheist.

Napoleon: Bah! Look at Monge and Laplace![{49}] Vanity of vanities!

[{50}] [Stenographic transcript, Conseil d'état, 1804] There are many paths to Paradise, and decent men have always been able to find theirs, from Socrates to the Quakers. This is my profession of faith.

[Conversation, 1815, aboard the *Bellerophon*] I am one of those who believe that the punishments of the other world have been invented merely in order to make up for its insufficient attractions such as they are described to us.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] Analyzing the two religions of the East and of the West most ingeniously, the Emperor said that ours was all spiritual, and Mohammed's all sensual; that punishments were dominant in ours—hell and its everlasting tortures; while with the Moslems it was all rewards—blue-eyed houris, pleasant groves, rivers of milk. And from this he drew the conclusion, contrasting the two religions, that Christianity might be described as a threat, a religion acting through fear,

while Islam was a promise and thus a religion of appeal.

[Conversation, 1817] If I had to have a religion, I should adore the sun, for it is the sun that fertilizes everything; it is the true god of the earth.

[Conversation, 1817] I would believe as firmly in Christ as does Pope Pius VII—if Christianity dated back to the beginning of the world, if it were the universal religion. But when I see Moslems follow a simpler religion, one better adapted to their way of life than ours—And then, Socrates and Plato would have to be damned: that's what I always used to ask the bishop of Évreux, and he told me no, God would rather perform a miracle in their favor. Do you really believe that God concerns himself with all our actions?

{51} [Conversation, 1816] A man should not assert anything concerning his last hour. At the present moment, no doubt, I am sure I shall die without a confessor....I am far from being an atheist, to be sure, but I cannot believe everything I am taught in spite of my reason, or I should be false and hypocritical.

[Conversation, 1819] My father, little devout though he was (he even had written some irreligious poems), had no sooner seen the coffin open a crack than he discovered that he loved the priests. He sought them out, he called them, there weren't enough priests in Montpellier for him. So sudden a transformation, experienced by all those whom a grave illness has attacked, can be explained only through the disorder that the disease carries into the human machine. Your organs are blunted, your morale totters, you lose your head—hence the urge for confession, *oremuses*, and all those fine things that it seems one can't die without. But look at man in his full vigor, look at those columns ready to throw themselves into the battlefield: the drum beats the charge; now they move; the grapeshot mows them down. There is no question of priests or confession.

[To his confessor, April 19, 1821] When I am dead, you will place your altar at my head, in the room where I lie in state. You will continue to say Mass, you will perform all the customary ceremonies, you will not cease until I am in the ground.

These somewhat militarily worded instructions shed no more light on Napoleon's true feelings than does the conventional opening sentence of his last will (April 15, 1821): "I die in the apostolic and Roman faith, in whose bosom I was born more than fifty years ago."

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

{52} [Manuscript, 1786] Always alone in the midst of men, I come to my room to dream by myself, to abandon myself to my melancholy in all its sharpness. In which direction does it lead today? Toward death. At the dawn of my life I may still hope to live a long time. For six or seven years I have been away from home [Corsica]. What happiness shall I taste when in four months I shall see my countrymen and family again! From the tender feelings which the memories of childhood make me experience, may I not deduce that my bliss will be complete? What fury drives me to desire my own destruction? Indeed, what am I to do in this world? Since die I must, is it not just as well to kill myself? If I had already passed my sixtieth year, I would respect the prejudice of my contemporaries and would wait patiently for nature to take its course. But since my misfortunes are beginning, since nothing is pleasure to me, why should I bear days that nothing turns to profit? How far men have got away from nature! How cowardly they are, how vile and rampant! What shall I find in my country? My compatriots charged with chains, trembling as they kiss the hand of their oppressor!...

When the fatherland is no more, the patriot must die. If in order to free my countrymen all I had to do was destroy one man, I should set out this

instant and plunge into the tyrant's breast the avenging sword of fatherland and law. Life is a burden to me because I taste no pleasure and all is pain to me. It is a burden because the men with whom I live and probably shall always live have ways as different from mine as the moon from the sun. Thus I cannot pursue the only way of life that could make life tolerable—hence distaste for everything.

The following letter was addressed from Verona to General Clarke, who later served as Napoleon's minister of war.

[1796] Your nephew Elliot has been killed on the battlefield of Arcole. That young man had acquired valuable military experience. Several times he had marched at the head of our columns. Some day he would have been a most valuable officer. He died gloriously and facing the enemy; he did not suffer for an instant. What reasonable man would not have chosen such a death? What man is there who, in the vicissitudes of life, would not have put down his money to buy such a way out of an often contemptible world? Who is there among us who has not wished a hundred times to be thus exempted from the powerful effects of calumny, envy, and all the hateful passions that almost exclusively seem to guide the conduct of men?

{53} [Order of the Day, May 12, 1802] The grenadier Grobain has killed himself for love. Otherwise he was a very good citizen. This is the second time in a month that such an event has occurred in the Guards.

On command of the First Consul the following is put into the order of the day: That a soldier must know how to conquer the suffering and the melancholy brought on by the passions.

[December 1, 1805, to his staff on the eve of Austerlitz] One must have the will to live and be willing to die.

[After abdicating, April 11, 1814] To kill myself would be a gambler's death. I am condemned to live. Besides, only the dead do not return.{54}

[Dictation, 1820] Has a man the right to kill himself? Yes, if his death harms no one and if life is an evil to him.

When is life an evil? When it offers a man nothing but suffering and pain. However, since sufferings and pain change at every instant, there is not a moment in life when a man has the right to kill himself. The moment could not come till the very hour of his death, since only then could it be proved to him that his life has been nothing but a web of suffering and evil.

There is no man who has not wanted to kill himself several times in his life, yielding to the moral diseases of his soul, and who, a few days later, would not have regretted it because of changes that have intervened in these diseases and in circumstances. The man who kills himself on Monday might wish to live on Saturday, and yet one kills oneself only once.

Man's life is made up of the past, the present, and the future. Thus life would have to be an evil for him, if not in respect to the past, present, and future, then at least as to the present and the future. But if life is only a present evil, he sacrifices the future. The evils of the day do not give him the right to sacrifice his future life. The man whose life is an evil and who possesses the certainty (which is impossible) that it must remain so forever, whose position and will can be altered neither by changes in circumstances and situation nor by habit and the passage of time (another impossibility)—that man alone would have the right to kill himself.

The man who, breaking down under the weight of present evils, ends his life commits a grave injustice toward himself and yields through despair and weakness to a momentary mood at the expense of his entire future existence.

The analogy of the gangrenous arm that is amputated to save the body does not apply. When the surgeon cuts off the arm, he is certain that that limb would bring death to the body: this is not a feeling but a fact. Whereas, when the sufferings of life drive a man to suicide, he not only makes an end of them but destroys the future as well. A man will never repent having had his arm amputated, but he may and almost always does repent his self-inflicted death.

This monologue, this odd wrestling with the obvious, was dictated by a physical wreck and a failing mind. And yet, seven months later and dying, the wreck could say: “It is not weakness, it is strength that smothers me; I am killed by life.” The life of his cancer, of his spirochetes? Or the confined energy that kept his hopes alive and allowed him to look on the last stages of his dissolution as on a promise of change?

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

{55} [Manuscript, before 1793] We are born for the enjoyment of life. Happiness is merely the enjoyment of life in the manner that conforms best to our nature. We are born, then, to be happy.

We continuously experience agreeable or disagreeable sensations. No one can deny that nature shies from the latter and inclines us to avoid them just as she causes us to seek help from a physician to recover our health. We experience these sensations in all conditions of life, the laborer like the prince, but under varying forms.

In what does this enjoyment of life consist? We must go down into our hearts and read there.

We perceive in animals no other occupation than getting food. Yet they appear to be susceptible to passions: the dog, of love; the cow, of

compassion; the elephant, of gratitude; and so forth. But only extremely long habit seems to make them susceptible of all these various attributes of the soul. It would be difficult, then, to deny them an instinct similar to ours, though on a much lesser scale. Since this instinct is not nearly enough developed to admit of ideas, they merely have images which, though quite adequate in warning them of danger and insuring their conservation, are not derived from any sort of imagination. Animals lack the restlessness that comes from imagination and consequently are incapable of perfectibility, which requires the ability to compare images or ideas, an ability which we have said they do not possess.

For example, a small child believes he can grasp an object at the opposite end of a table. He discovers that he cannot. Another time, he will approach the object. A horse wants to pass from one meadow into the next. He walks straight ahead, comes to an obstructing wall, and follows it until he finds an opening. Yet this is an acquired perfection. Birds build their nests exactly as they did a thousand years ago, and so do bees.

Man has moral as well as physical needs. To eat is the first law of all creatures. Man is exceptional in that he spends far less time in eating, and it would seem that this activity—to ruminate and to sleep—is the proper occupation of beasts. But which is man’s? The chain of events brings him pleasures and pains, caused by his passions, without which he would experience neither pain nor pleasure and be the unhappiest of created beings. But what do I say? He would no longer be a man! His peculiar ability to compare gives birth, by producing reflection and imagination, to all the passions by which we see him ever agitated. As a physical being, man must eat; as a moral being, he must master himself. In what consists this mastery? In guiding his passions, his moral faculties, in such a manner as to make each one tend toward his happiness.

Physical self-preservation is the first law of nature; the wish for happiness comes next. What is happiness? The end to which we are on earth —that is, the true enjoyment of life. Do men not go astray while seeking it? Almost always....Each of their several ruling passions dominates them in turn and causes them to prostitute the name of happiness to the fulfillment of that passion....They never act in cold blood.

Half of the world is ambitious and seeks happiness in honors. Love of glory causes them to desire power and danger. Lust, avarice, wealth; love, the possession of a woman; philanthropy, the relief of the poor; idleness, study, curiosity, success (often these passions combine in a single person: he is ambitious, voluptuous, and in love. He no longer calls himself)[{56}] happy except in the approximate sense in which a man dying of thirst calls it happiness to drink water. Thus the acute desire to attain happiness is one of the principal causes of the powerful hold a passion has on us.

When on rising from sleep a man does not know what to do with himself and drags his tedious existence from place to place; when, scanning the future, he sees nothing but dreadful monotony, one day resembling the next; when he asks himself, “Why do I exist?”—then, in my opinion, he is the most wretched of all. His machine breaks down, his heart loses the energy that is proper to man. How can this empty heart manage to exist? To live thus is to lead the life of beasts with the moral faculties peculiar to our nature. Happy he if he did not possess these faculties! And so this man is discouraged by every trifle. The least defeat seems to him an unbearable calamity. It is a quiet life, but where are its rewards? The scholar seems to be in the same position. He studies, he argues, his reason will be satisfied, but has he no heart? Where will this heap of varied knowledge lead him? Will not the emptiness of his solitude, will not an inner emotion tell him, “No! I am not happy”?

[Conversation, early 1800s] I am not made for pleasure.

ON IMMORTALITY

{57} [Repeated saying] What is a great reputation? A big noise. The more noise you make, the farther it will go. Laws, institutions, monuments, nations, all this passes—but the noise it makes continues to vibrate through other generations.

[Conversation with Bourrienne, 1800 or 1801, when a mission from the pope was negotiating the Concordat in Paris] Guess what they are holding out to me. The salvation of my soul! But as far as I am concerned, there is no immortality but the memory that is left in the minds of men.

[Letter to Jérôme, 1802] The young, and I shall accept your death—but not if you have lived without glory, without being useful to your country, without leaving a trace of your existence: for that is not to have lived at all.

[Letter to General Leclerc, 1802] Everything on earth is soon forgotten, except the opinion we leave imprinted on history.

ON DESTINY AND FATALISM

{58} [Manuscript, 1791] Men of genius are meteors destined to be consumed in lighting up their century.

[Conversation, 1816] A man cannot excel unless he is of a unique cast. I am a fragment of rock thrown into space.

{59} [Letter, 1797] There are things written in the great book of destiny that must be accomplished whatever one does.

[Letter, 1807] All my life I have sacrificed everything—comfort, self-interest, happiness—to my destiny.

[Conversation, 1815, aboard the *Bellerophon*] Destiny must be fulfilled

—that is my chief doctrine.

[Conversation, 1816] *Napoleon:* Is it true that they picture me as a thorough fatalist?

Las Cases: Why yes, Sire, at least many people do.

Napoleon: Well now, well now—Let them talk. At that, they may want to imitate me, and that may at times have its useful points. Men are strange, though! It is easier to impress them and strike their imagination with tomfooleries than with sound ideas. But how can a sensible person be deceived for a moment? Either fatalism is compatible with free will or it excludes it. If it is compatible, how can an effect be determined in advance, as they say, and yet be modified *ad infinitum* by the slightest whim, a single step, a single word? If, on the contrary, fatalism excludes free will, it's a different matter. Then, when you come into the world, all that has to be done is throw you into your cradle, without taking the least care. If it is irrevocably preordained that you shall live, even if you get nothing to eat or drink, you will grow up anyhow. You can easily see that this doctrine is indefensible, it's just a word. Even the Turks, those champions of fatalism, are far from convinced by it. Otherwise they would have no physicians, and people living on the third floor would not trouble to waste time walking downstairs, but come down directly through the window.

MEN OF DESTINY: BONAPARTE, WASHINGTON, MOHAMMED, CHRIST

{60} [Dictation, Saint Helena, on the coup d'état of 18 Brumaire] When a deplorable weakness and ceaseless vacillations become manifest in supreme councils; when, yielding in turn to the influences of opposing parties, making shift from day to day, and marching with uncertain pace, a government has proved the full measure of its impotence; when even the

most moderate citizens are forced to admit that the State is no longer governed; when, in fine, the administration adds to its nullity at home the gravest guilt it can acquire in the eyes of a proud nation—I mean its humiliation abroad—then a vague unrest spreads through the social body, the instinct of self-preservation is stirred, and the nation casts a sweeping eye over itself, as if to seek a man who can save it.

This guardian angel a great nation harbors in its bosom at all times; yet sometimes he is late in making his appearance. Indeed, it is not enough for him to exist: he also must be known. He must know himself. Until then, all endeavors are in vain, all schemes collapse. The inertia of the masses protects the nominal government, and despite its ineptitude and weakness the efforts of its enemies fail. But let that impatiently awaited savior give a sudden sign of his existence, and the people's instinct will divine him and call upon him. The obstacles are smoothed before his steps, and a whole great nation, flying to see him pass, will seem to be saying: "Here is the man!"

[Conversation, 1816, reported in English] Your nation [the British] called Washington a leader of rebels for a long time and refused to acknowledge either him or the independence of his country; but his success obliged them to change their minds and acknowledge both. It is success which makes the great man.

[Conversation, 1817] Mohammed came at a moment when general opinion was ready for a single God....A man is but a man, but often he can do much; often he is a tinderbox in the midst of inflammable matter.

[Conversation, 1817] Jesus probably was hanged like so many fanatics who wanted to act the part of the prophet, the Messiah. Every year, there were several....What is certain is that public opinion at the time favored a

single God and that those who spoke of him first were well received. Thus were the circumstances. It's like myself: if from the lowest social class{61} I rose to be Emperor, this was possible because of the circumstances and a favorable public opinion.

ON MASTERING FORTUNE

{62} [Letter to Talleyrand, 1797] All great events hang by a single thread. The clever man takes advantage of everything, neglects nothing that may give him some added opportunity; the less clever man, by neglecting one thing, sometimes misses everything.

[Conversation, 1816] A consecutive series of great actions never is the result of chance and luck; it always is the product of planning and genius. Great men are rarely known to fail in their most perilous enterprises....Is it because they are lucky that they become great? No, but being great, they have been able to master luck.

{63} [Letter to Jérôme, 1805] What I am, I owe to strength of will, character, application, and daring.

[Conversation with Bourrienne, 1805] Who could have told me, when we used to wander like two boobies through the streets of Paris, that one day I should be the master of France? My will—but a vague kind of will. Circumstances have done the rest. The wise thing, then, is to take care of things as they come, and this is what I am doing.

[Letter to Josephine, 1806] The greater one is, the less will he must have. He depends on events and circumstances.

[Conversation, 1816] I had few really definite ideas, and the reason for this was that, instead of obstinately seeking to control circumstances, I obeyed them, and they forced me to change my mind all the time. Thus it

happened that most of the time, to tell the truth, I had no definite plans but only projects.

After the destruction of the French fleet in Aboukir Bay by Nelson in 1798, Bourrienne, Bonaparte's friend and secretary, prepared a factual report to the Directory on the disaster. Napoleon was not satisfied.

{64} [To Bourrienne, 1798] This is too vague, too smooth. It should be more staccato, mention many details, speak of those who distinguished themselves. And then, you don't say a word about Fortune....You don't know men! Leave it to me, I'll dictate.

[From Napoleon's own report to the Directory, Cairo, August 19, 1798] No matter how great the reverse, it cannot be attributed to the inconstancy of Fortune. She has not yet abandoned us: far from it, she has served us better in this operation than ever before.

When I sighted Alexandria and was informed that the English fleet had been there, with superior forces, several days earlier, I ordered a landing despite the frightful storm that was blowing and at the risk of shipwreck. I recall that at the instant when we were getting ready to disembark, a man of war was sighted in the distance, sailing before the wind. I exclaimed, "Fortune, hast thou abandoned me? Five days is all I ask of thee!" The ship turned out to be the *Justice* [a French ship] coming from Malta.

We marched all night. I attacked Alexandria at daybreak, with three thousand worn-out men, without artillery, almost without cartridges, and within five days I was master of Rosetta and Damanhur, that is to say, firmly established in Egypt. In these five days, the fleet should have found shelter from the British, no matter what their strength; but, far from it, it remained exposed throughout the month of Messidor. Early in Thermidor it received two months' rice supplies from Rosetta. For ten days the English

showed themselves in superior numbers in these waters. On 11 Thermidor, our fleet received news of our complete mastery over Egypt and our entry into Cairo. Only then, when Fortune realized the uselessness of all her favors, did she abandon our fleet to its fate.

[Conversation, near Maloyaroslavets, October 23, 1812, related by Ségur] The Emperor shortly before had sent Marshal Bessières to reconnoiter the disposition of the enemy. Bessières obeyed and carefully surveyed the Russian front position. “It is unassailable,” he reported. “O Heavens!” the Emperor cried out, joining his hands. “Are you sure? Is it really true? Can you answer for it?” Bessières repeated his assertion, affirming that “three hundred grenadiers in that position would be enough to stop a whole army.” Then Napoleon was seen to cross his arms with an air of consternation, lower his head, and stand motionless as if sunk in the most melancholy reflections. His army, he said, was victorious, and he defeated! His route cut off, his maneuver frustrated! Kutuzov, a dotard, a barbarian, had outmaneuvered him! And he could not even blame his star. Had not the sun of France followed him into Russia? [That autumn of 1812 was unusually and deceptively mild.] Only yesterday the Maloyaroslavets road had been open. It was not his luck, then, that had failed him. Was it he who had failed his luck?

{65} [Letter, 1797] He who fears to lose his reputation is sure to lose it.

[When asked why, in 1797, he stopped at Leoben instead of marching on to Vienna] Because I was playing at Twenty-One, and I held at twenty.

[On the capture of Malta, 1798; dictation, c. 1817] Napoleon made sure that he might dare, and dared.

[To his staff, on the projected campaign of 1812] To sum it up, a battle is my plan of campaign, and success is my whole policy.

[To Caulaincourt, December 1812] This is how the smallest events change the destinies of the world. The mistakes of our enemies often are more useful to them than their abilities and cause us to commit mistakes still greater than theirs.

[At the beginning of the 1813 campaign, in conversation] If the art of war were nothing but the art of avoiding risks, glory would become the prey of mediocre minds....

I have made all the calculations: fate will do the rest.

[Conversation, battle of Waterloo] This morning we still had ninety chances out of a hundred in our favor. Bülow's arrival cost us thirty, but we still have sixty against forty.

[Conversation, after losing at Waterloo] *Lucien Bonaparte:* What has happened to your firmness? Put a stop to your wavering. You know what it costs not to dare.

Napoleon: I have but dared too much.

[Conversation, 1816] A man who has lost courage lacks decision because he faces alternatives that are all undesirable. And the worst thing in our enterprises is indecision.

THE COURSE OF AMBITION

{66} [Conversation, 1816] Imagination rules the world.

[Conversation, 1817] Imagination is like the Danube: at its source, it can be crossed in a leap.

{67} [Manuscript, early 1790s] But ambition, that immoderate desire to satisfy vanity or intemperance, which, never sated, leads Alexander from Thebes to Persia, from the Granicus to Issus, from Issus to Arbela, from

Arbela to India—ambition causes him to conquer and ravage the world and yet fails to appease him. The same ardor still consumes him, and in his delirium he no longer knows what course he should give it. In his agitation he goes astray....Alexander believes himself a god, he thinks himself the son of Jupiter, and he wants to make others believe it....

Ambition, which overthrows governments and private fortunes, which feeds on blood and crimes, ambition...is, like all inordinate passions, a violent and unthinking fever that ceases only when life ceases—like a conflagration which, fanned by a pitiless wind, ends only after all has been consumed.

Richelieu, born in obscurity, succeeds after ceaseless effort and torment in becoming king under the name of minister. No doubt he will savor his success and be at rest. What is left for him to desire?...But he is not a cardinal! He obtains the red hat. But there is a Corneille in the kingdom! He turns poet, and his flatterers, as may be supposed, place him in the first rank. Now, what more can he covet?...The same madness that alienated Alexander's brain, produced by the same cause, takes hold of Richelieu....He wants to be believed a saint. He dies in that hope, and his last sigh is the act of an impostor, which, however, he trusts will lead him to his goal.

{68} [Conversation, 1804] Besides, as far as I am concerned, I have no ambition—or, if I have any, it is so natural to me, so innate, so intimately linked with my existence that it is like the blood that circulates in my veins, like the air I breathe. It causes me to act neither more precipitately, nor in any way differently, than do the natural motives that move me. I never am obliged to fight either for or against ambition. Ambition never is in a greater hurry than I; it merely keeps pace with circumstances and with my general

way of thinking.

[Conversation, 1805] There is only one thing to do in this world, and that is to keep acquiring more and more money and power. All the rest is chimerical.

[Letter to the king of Prussia, 1805] I have no ambition.

{69} [Conversation, 1816, reported by Las Cases] Returning to his military debut at Toulon...he said: “I still was far from considering myself a superior man.” And he repeated that it was only after Lodi [1796] that he conceived the first ideas of high ambition, and that this ambition fully revealed itself only on the soil of Egypt, after the victory of the Pyramids and the capture of Cairo, etc. “Then indeed,” said he, “I felt that I could abandon myself to the most brilliant dreams.”

[Conversation, 1817, related by Gourgaud] He asked us at what period he had in our opinion been the happiest. I answered, “At your marriage.” Mme de Montholon: “First Consul.” Bertrand: “Birth of the king of Rome.”

“Yes, I was happy when First Consul, at my marriage, at the birth of the king of Rome—but at those times I was not confident enough in myself. Perhaps it was at Tilsit. I had suffered reverses, I had had worries—at Eylau, for instance—and suddenly I found myself victorious, laying down the law, courted by emperors and kings. Perhaps I actually felt greater satisfaction after my victories in Italy. What enthusiasm! What shouting! ‘Long live the liberator of Italy!’ At twenty-five! From that moment, I foresaw what I might be. Already I felt the earth flee from beneath me, as if I were being carried to the sky.”

{70} [Conversation, 1797] Europe is a molehill. All great empires and revolutions have been in the Orient; six hundred millions live there.

[Conversation, early 1800s] In Egypt, I found myself freed from the obstacles of an irksome civilization. I was full of dreams, and I saw the means by which I could carry out all that I had dreamed. I saw myself founding a religion, marching into Asia, riding an elephant, a turban on my head and in my hand the new Koran that I would have composed to suit my needs. In my undertakings I would have combined the experiences of the two worlds, exploiting for my own profit the theater of all history, attacking the power of England in India, and, by means of that conquest, renewing contact with the old Europe. The time I spent in Egypt was the most beautiful of my life, for it was the most ideal.

[To Bourrienne, after winning the battle of Marengo, 1800] My dear fellow, if I should die tomorrow, I would not be given more than half a page in a general history written ten centuries from now.

[Conversation with his staff, night of December 1, 1805, on the eve of Austerlitz] If I had been able to take Acre [in 1799], I would have put on a turban, I would have made my soldiers wear big Turkish trousers, and I would have exposed them to battle only in case of extreme necessity. I would have made them into a sacred battalion—my immortals. I would have finished the war against the Turks with Arabic, Greek, and Armenian troops. Instead of a battle in Moravia, I would have won a battle at Issus, I would have made myself emperor of the East, and I would have returned to Paris by way of Constantinople.

{71} [Conversation, December 3, 1804, the day after his coronation] I come too late, nothing great remains to be done....Yes, I admit that I have had a fine career, I have gone far. But what a difference with antiquity! Look at Alexander: when he had conquered Asia and presented himself to the nations as the son of Jupiter, the whole Orient believed him, except for

Olympias, who knew better, and except for Aristotle and a few Athenian pedants. Well, if I declared myself the son of the Eternal Father, if I announced that I would give my thanks to Him in that capacity, every fishwife would hoot when she saw me pass by. The masses are too enlightened these days: nothing great can be done any more.

[Autograph letter to Sir Hudson Lowe, governor of Saint Helena, 1817] You have miscalculated the heights to which misfortune, the injustice and persecution of your government, and your own conduct have raised the Emperor. His head wears more than an imperial crown—it wears a crown of thorns.

It is not in your power, or in that of the like of you, to obscure the radiance of that crown.

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THE CONQUEST OF HISTORY

History I conquered rather than studied: that is to say, I wanted from it and retained of it only what could add to my ideas, I *spurned what was of no use, and I seized upon certain conclusions that pleased me.*

"AGREED-UPON FICTION"

{72} [Conversation, 1816] It must be admitted that the *true truths* are very difficult to ascertain in history. Fortunately they have more curiosity interest than real importance. There are so many truths!...

Historical fact, which is so often invoked, to which everyone so readily appeals, is often a mere word: it cannot be ascertained when events actually occur, in the heat of contrary passions; and if, later on, there is a consensus, this is only because there is no one left to contradict. But if this is so, what is this historical truth in nearly every case? An agreed-upon fiction, as has been most ingeniously said.

In all such things there are two very distinct essential elements—material fact and moral intent. Material facts, one should think, ought to be incontrovertible; and yet, go and see if any two accounts agree. There are facts that remain in eternal litigation. As for moral intent, how is one to find his way, supposing even that the narrators are in good faith? And what if they are prompted by bad faith, self-interest, and bias? Suppose I have given an order: who can read the bottom of my thought, my true intention? And yet everybody will take hold of that order, measure it by his own yardstick, make it bend to conform to his plans, his individual way of thinking....And everybody will be so confident of his own version! The lesser mortals will hear of it from privileged mouths, and they will be so confident in tum! Then the flood of memoirs, diaries, anecdotes, drawing-

room reminiscences! And yet, my friend, that is history!

THREE WAYS OF VIEWING HISTORY

{73} [Address to his army, July 22, 1798, as recalled by Napoleon in 1817] When the battle was about to begin, Napoleon, pointing to the Pyramids, said to his troops: “Soldiers, forty centuries have their eyes upon you.”

{74} [Letter, 1805] The Fates are spinning the lives of men; destiny has assigned each nation’s term. A blind fatality drives the House of Austria.

[Conversation, 1816] Nations and sovereigns know no petty events: it is the petty events that shape their destinies.

{75} [Letter, 1805] England, having attained the peak of her prosperity, is on the decline and from now on can only lose.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] Nations like men have their various ages—infancy, maturity, old age.

[Repeated saying] Nations have their diseases like individuals, and their case histories would be no less interesting to write than those of human diseases.

LAND POWER AND SEA POWER

{76} [Manuscript, 1788] There are two roads by which nations can rise to great power.

A maximum of equality, frugality, wisdom, great courage, stable institutions, vigorously applied principles, and, above all, a great contempt for riches: Rome, Sparta, Crotona, Persia succeeded by that road.

A flourishing commerce intelligently fostered and encouraged by a large degree of freedom gives birth to a good fleet, increases the population, enriches the citizens, fills the public treasury, and furnishes inexhaustible

resources. In that case, policy must aim chiefly at stimulating continuous activity in the circulation [of goods and currency]. Art, science, and monuments seem to be particularly suited to this form of government, although they played no part at the beginning: Tyre, Carthage, Athens, Sybaris, Syracuse, etc., etc., etc.

Experience nearly always proves that, when nations of the latter category are in conflict with those of the first, they are almost invariably defeated because war destroys their commerce and gradually exhausts them, while the others are toughened and strengthened and are, so to speak, in their own element—provided, however, that the war is not carried into their own territory, which is their only resource for the sustenance of life.

AN AGE OF TRANSITION

{77} [Conseil d'état, 1806] My usual reading fare, when I go to bed, is the old chronicles of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. I read them or have them translated for me. Nothing is more curious, or less known, than the change from the old way of life to the new, than the transition from the ancient political bodies to the new ones that were founded on their ruins.

GEOGRAPHY AND POLITICS

{78} [Dictation, 1816] The area of Italy contained within the [Alpine] semicircle is 5,000 square leagues. From the diameter of that semicircle, Italy extends in the shape of a boot which, being 200 leagues in length, contains, from Parma to the Gulf of Taranto, 8,000 square leagues. Sicily and Sardinia: 2,000 square leagues. Total: 15,000 square leagues. Thus, about two thirds of Italy extends along that line of prolongation and is surrounded by the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas.

This singular configuration has beyond any doubt influenced the destiny

of that lovely country. If the peninsula, instead of being 40 to 50 leagues, had been 90 to 100 leagues wide, and only half its actual length, its center would have been closer to its whole periphery; there would have been a greater community of interests. The nation, spread over lesser distances, would have been more uniform and would have fought off with better success the designs to break it up; and the cohesive tendency that has united France, England, and Spain would have acted upon Italy as well.

It is interesting to compare this analysis with another passage, dictated at the same period, in which Napoleon echoes Machiavelli *(Discourses* I. xii). The italicized words are virtually copied from the Florentine.

Without the politics of the popes, the public spirit of the Italians—an enlightened and passionate nation—would have surmounted these local obstacles. *But the Vatican, too weak to unite all Italy under its domination, was at all times powerful enough to prevent any one republic or prince from unifying it under his authority.* Three things were opposed to that great design: (1) the possessions held by foreign powers [in Italy]; (2) the local spirit; (3) the residence of the popes in Rome.

THE RISE OF MONOTHEISM

{79} [Dictation, c. 1817] Moses revealed God's existence to his nation; Jesus Christ, to the Roman Empire; Mohammed, to the ancient continent. Moses freed the descendants of Jacob from the Egyptian captivity. He retained them in the desert for forty years and there gave them laws. They never ceased yearning after those "fleshpots from which they had eaten to the full." In order to combat their nostalgic spirit he labored to inspire them with an exclusive character and to isolate them amid all other nations. The Hebrews knew the true God a thousand years before other men.

Jesus Christ, although descended from David, laid no claim to the throne

of his fathers. He obeyed, and commanded obedience to, any established government. “All power comes from God. My kingdom is not of this world. Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s.” In his divine mission he had only one aim: to regulate men’s consciences, to guide souls in this life that they might achieve happiness in the next. The Gospels prescribe no rule whatever for the government of earthly things. Christian doctrine contained nothing that could have incited the jealousy of the Cæsars; on the other hand, for the same reason, it was extremely favorable to the dynasties that rose from the rubble of the Roman Empire: it legitimatized them. Clovis was not truly king before his consecration.

The Christian religion is that of a highly civilized people. It heightens man’s stature. It proclaims the superiority of spirit over matter, of the soul over the body. It was born in the schools of Greece. It was the triumph of men such as Socrates, Plato, Aristides, over the Flaminiuses, the Scipios, the Paulluses. The Romans conquered Greece by the strength of their arms but they were insensibly subjugated by the irresistible influence of the spirit, the arts, and the sciences of the vanquished. The basic canons of the Church were discussed and decreed in the councils held in the East during the first eight centuries, at Nicaea, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Chalcedon, Caesarea, and Athens. Like everything established by the sole strength of persuasion, like everything resulting from the progress of the mind, the religion of Christ progressed slowly. It required four centuries to take its seat on the throne. The apotheosis of Caesar and of Augustus had been followed by those of the most abject tyrants. The masses contracted a violent hatred for a religion that gave altars and priests to a Tiberius, a Caligula, a Heliogabalus. They found consolation in the dogma of an only God, immortal, uncreated, creator, judge and master of all.

The Christian Church promised to the righteous the reward of seeing

God face to face, an entirely spiritual bliss, at the same time that it threatened the damned with entirely material punishments, since they were to burn in flaming furnaces. This contrast may be explained. If the wicked had been threatened with merely spiritual punishments, they would have defied them; the bridle would have been too weak to repress their evil tendencies. On the other hand, a Paradise in which the chosen tasted earthly pleasures would have exalted the flesh, and Christian morality aims primarily at repressing and mortifying it. Thus imperfect contrition is, like perfect contrition, a means of salvation.

Arabia was idolatrous when, seven centuries after Christ, Mohammed introduced the cult of the God of Abraham, Ishmael, Moses, and Jesus. The Arians and other sects that had troubled the peace of the East had stirred up the problems of the nature of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Mohammed declared there was but one God who had neither father nor son and that the Trinity carried a germ of idolatry. He wrote on the frontispiece of the Koran: “There is no god but God.” The nations to which he addressed himself were savage and poor. They lacked everything and were extremely ignorant. If he had spoken to their minds, he would not have been heard. In the midst of the abundance of Greece, the pleasures of spiritual contemplation had been a need. But in the middle of the desert, where the Bedouin longed constantly for a spring, for the shade of a palm tree to shelter him from the burning rays of the tropical sun, it was necessary to promise other rewards to the chosen—ever-flowing rivers of milk and fragrant groves under whose eternal shade they might rest in the arms of divine white-skinned and dark-eyed maidens. The Bedouins contracted a passion for so enchanting a dwelling place. They braved everything to arrive there: they became heroes.

Mohammed was a ruler. He rallied his countrymen around him. Within a

few years his Moslems conquered half the world. They tore more souls away from the false gods, they overthrew more idols, they demolished more pagan temples in fifteen years than the followers of Moses and Christ had done in fifteen centuries. Mohammed was a great man. He would in effect have become a god if the revolution which he precipitated had not been prepared by circumstances. When he appeared on the scene the Arabs had, for many years, been toughened by civil wars. Whatever great things nations have accomplished on the stage of the world they have done at times when they were emerging from the kind of crisis that tempers body and soul anew. If the Arabs had lost the battles of al-Qadisiah and [blank in manuscript], which made it possible for the intrepid Moslems to raise the standard of the Prophet on the Oxus and on the confines of China; if they had lost at Ajnadayn and at Yarmuk, which placed Syria and Egypt under their sway; if such leaders as Khalid, Derar, or Amr had been routed and thrown back into their immense deserts—the Arabs would have resumed their nomadic life, they would have gone on living like their fathers, in wretched poverty. The names of Mohammed, Ali, and Omar would be unknown to the world.

The progressive rise of Christianity, on the contrary, did not depend on the outcome of any secondary event. That religion spread and insinuated itself like a doctrine which captivates and persuades and whose march cannot be stopped by anything. Constantine hastened its triumph—but if he had not asked to be baptized, one of his successors would have done so sooner or later. Jesus Christ was a preacher; he gave his apostles the gift of tongues. Moses and Mohammed were national leaders who gave laws and ruled the affairs of this world. “The sword is the key to Heaven,” says the Prophet. “Whosoever perishes in battle is absolved of his sins. The wings of angels shall replace the limbs that have been lost in battle; the censer and

the sword are one." He was intolerant and exclusive. To kill the infidels or to force them to pay tribute, to destroy the power of idolatry because it is an outrage to God—this is enjoined on every page of the Koran. Never did the Moslems sincerely submit to the authority of any idolatrous prince.

The three religions that have spread the knowledge of an immortal God, uncreated, master and creator of man, all originated in Arabia. Moses, Christ, Mohammed were Arabs, born in Memphis, in Nazareth [sic], in Mecca. Europe, Asia, Africa, America, with all their immense deserts, their mighty mountains, their vast seas, their fertile plains, their huge cities, are invoking Moses, Christ, or Mohammed, take their laws from the Pentateuch, the Gospels, or the Koran, and turn their eyes toward Arabia, Jerusalem, Nazareth, or Mecca. If Rome is the capital of Christendom, it is because the Scipios, the Cæsars, the Trajans had conquered a portion of the world. The influence of the New Rome is a result of the power of the old. But why do Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Mecca all belong to the same country?

THE RISE OF CAPITALISM

{80} [Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] The Emperor then spoke of a few points of political economy advanced by Smith in his *Wealth of Nations.* He admitted their theoretical correctness but proved that they were false in practice....He finished by saying:

"In former times only one kind of property was known—landed property. A new kind has made its appearance—industrial property—and it is at present engaged in a struggle with the first. Then a third kind: the property derived from huge revenues raised by the administration. These revenues, distributed by the impersonal and disinterested hands of the government, may protect the two others from monopoly, act as their

intermediary, and prevent them from fighting each other." He called this great struggle of our days the war between the fields and the counting-houses, between the castles and the factories.

"And yet," said he, "it is because we have refused to take notice of this great revolution, because we have obstinately shut our eyes to these truths that so many follies are committed in our days and that we risk so many violent upheavals. The world has experienced a great shift, and it seeks to settle in a new position. Here, in a few words, you have the explanation of the universal unrest that is plaguing us."

"LET NO ONE SEARCH THE PAST..."

{81} [Speech to the upper house, 18 Brumaire, Year VIII/November 9, 1799] Let no one search the past for examples that might slow down our advance! Nothing in all history resembles the last years of the eighteenth century; nothing in the last years of the eighteenth century resembles the present moment.

[Conversation, December 1812] Nations and individuals alike learn only from their own experience—and, most of the time, from misfortunes.

GREAT MEN OF ANTIQUITY

{82} [Inscription on a monument to Henry IV] Great men rejoice in the glory of those who resemble them.

{83} [Conversation, 1816] Alexander had barely outgrown his boyhood when with a handful of men he conquered a portion of the globe: but was this, on his part, a mere irruption, a kind of deluge? No—everything was calculated deeply, carried out audaciously, and managed wisely. Alexander proved himself at once a great warrior, a great statesman, a great lawgiver. Unfortunately, upon attaining the zenith of his glory and success, his head

was turned, or his heart corrupted. He had started out with the soul of Trajan; he ended up with the heart of Nero and the morals of Heliogabalus.

[Conversation, 1818] What I like in Alexander the Great is not his campaigns, which we cannot understand, but his political methods. At thirty-three he left an immense and firmly established empire, which his generals partitioned among themselves. He possessed the art of winning the love of the nations he defeated. He was right in ordering the murder of Parmenion, who like a fool had objected to Alexander's abandonment of Greek customs. It was most politic of him to go to Amon [to be proclaimed a god]: it was thus he conquered Egypt. If I had remained in the East, I probably would have founded an empire like Alexander by going on pilgrimage to Mecca, where I would have prayed and kneeled.

{84} [Dictation, c. 1820] In murdering Caesar, Brutus yielded to a prejudice he had acquired in the schools of Greece. He assimilated Caesar with those obscure tyrants of the Peloponnesus who, with the help of a few schemers, usurped the authority over their cities. He refused to realize that Caesar's authority was legitimate because it was a necessary safeguard, because it assured the preservation of all the interests of Rome, because it was in fact the result of the popular opinion and will....Caesar did not want to be king because he could not want it. He could not want it because, after him, for six hundred years, none of his successors wanted it. It would have been strange politics to substitute for the curule chair of the world's conquerors the rotten and despised throne of the conquered.

A GALLERY OF KINGS OF FRANCE

{85} [Dictation, c. 1817] In 1250 Egypt was less capable of defending herself and had fewer soldiers than in 1798. But Saint Louis did not know how to take advantage of the situation. He spent eight months praying when

he should have spent them marching, fighting, and consolidating his hold over the country.

[Conversation, 1816] Francis I was, after all, a mere hero of tournaments, a drawing-room beau, one of those monumental pygmies.

[Conversation, 1816] Henry IV never did anything great; he used to give 1,500 francs to his mistresses. Saint Louis was an imbecile. Louis XIV was the only king of France worthy of that name.

[Conversation, 1817] Henry IV was a good man, but he accomplished nothing out of the ordinary; and when that gray-beard ran after the wenches in the streets of Paris, he was just an old fool. But in order to have a foil to Louis XIV, who was hated, he was praised to the skies.

[Conversation, 1800s] If Louis XIV had not been born king, he would have been a great man. But he did not know men—he could not know them. And besides, he never suffered ill fortune!

[Dictation, c. 1820] Louis XIV was a great king. It was he who raised France to first rank among the nations of Europe. He was the first to have a standing army of four hundred thousand men and a navy of a hundred men-of-war. He added the Franche-Comté, Roussillon, and Flanders to France. He put a grandson on the throne of Spain. But the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the dragonnades, the papal bull *Unigenitus*, the two-hundred-million debt he left!...Alas, are there not spots even on the sun? Since Charlemagne, what king of France could be compared to Louis XIV in all his aspects?

FOUR MODERN HEROES

{86} [Conversation, 1800s, on Frederick the Great] I think that he is one of those who knew their business best in all respects.

[Dictation, c. 1820] Frederick was great above all at moments of great crisis. This is the highest praise that can be given his character.

{87} [Conversation, 1817] Cromwell possessed an essential ability—that of dissembling—and great political talents. He saw and judged things unfailingly. There is not a single occasion in his life where he might be accused of having miscalculated. An extraordinary man.

{88} [Conversation, 1812, in the Kremlin] As to the genius of Peter the Great, it has never been well understood. It is not realized that he acquired, through his own merits, a thing which even the greatest men lack if they are born to the throne—the triumph of having risen to the top and of having passed the tests such a triumph implies. Peter the Great on his own initiative made himself an artillery lieutenant, just as I have been. He wasn't merely playing a part. He uprooted himself in order to gain temporary freedom from his royal duties, in order to acquaint himself with everyday life and to reascend to greatness by degrees. He made himself what destiny has made me: this is what makes him unique among hereditary rulers.

{89} [Letter to the shah of Persia, 1805] Nadir Shah was a great warrior. He knew how to acquire supreme power. He made himself feared by the seditious and respected by his neighbors. He triumphed over his enemies and ruled gloriously. But he lacked the kind of wisdom which looks at once to the present and the future: his heirs did not succeed him.

ON TEACHING HISTORY

Napoleon in 1807 dictated the following observations concerning a project for establishing a special school for literature and history in the Collège de France.

{90} It is possible to relate history to those sciences which could be taught

to good advantage in a specialized school. The way history should be read is, in itself, a real science. Everything has been said and said over again. Apocryphal historians have multiplied, and there is so great a difference between a history written at one period and another history written at a later period with the help of the researches and insights of the earlier historians that a man who seeks solid information and who is suddenly put into a large historical library would feel caught in a veritable maze.

To know what remains extant of the ancient historians, what has been lost, how to distinguish original fragments from supplements written by good or bad commentators—these things alone almost constitute a science, or at least the object of important studies. Thus acquaintance with and the choice of good historians, reliable memoirs, or true contemporary chronicles form a useful and real branch of knowledge. If in a great capital like Paris there were a specialized school of history, beginning with a course in bibliography, a young man instead of wasting months getting lost in inadequate or unreliable literature would be guided toward the best works and would acquire sounder knowledge by an easier and shorter road.

There is, moreover, one section of history that cannot be learned in books—that of the most recent times. No historian ever reaches our times. For a young man of twenty-five, there always is the gap of the fifty years preceding his birth, on which there is no history. This gap creates many difficulties: linking the events of the past to those of the present requires a great deal of invariably imperfect and sometimes fruitless labor. To bridge this gap would be an important task of the professors in the special school of history.

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It is easy to guess at my secret intention, which is to bring together

scholars who will continue not the history of philosophy, not the history of religion, but the history of facts and who will carry that history down to our times. It is easier for our young people to learn about the Punic Wars than to know something of the American Revolution, which took place in 1783.

ON WRITING HISTORY

In 1808 the minister of the interior, Count Cretet, refused subsidies to a historian who wanted to continue the *Histoire de France* by Velly and others. He justified his refusal on the ground that it was not up to the government to subsidize such private pursuits. Napoleon reversed the decision by the following Note, which he himself dictated.

{91} His Majesty does not approve the principles stated by the minister of the interior in his Note. They were true twenty years ago, they will be true again sixty years from now, but they are false today....It is of the utmost importance to make sure that the continuation be written in the right spirit. Youth can judge facts only according to the manner in which they are presented. To deceive it by recalling memories means to lead it into future errors....

The writers to whom this project is to be entrusted must possess true talent, to be sure, but they also must be loyal men who will present facts in their true light and who will lay the groundwork for a sound education by continuing these historians from the point where they had stopped and by bringing the history up to the Year VIII [1799-1800].

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Henry IV, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, Louis XV should be given their due, but without adulation. The September Massacres and the horrors of the Revolution must be painted with the same brush as the Inquisition....When speaking of the Revolution, care should be taken to avoid any reactionary

tendency. No man could have prevented it. Neither those who perished nor those who survived should be blamed. There was no individual strong enough to change forces or to forestall events that were born from the nature of things and circumstances.

It is necessary to point out the perpetual disorder of public finances, the chaos of the provincial assemblies, the arrogance of the parlements, the irregularity and incompetence of the administration (France was a conglomeration of twenty kingdoms rather than a unified state), in such a manner that the reader should sigh with relief when he reaches our own epoch, which lets us enjoy the benefits bestowed upon us by uniform laws, government, and local administration. The continual weakness of the government even under Louis XIV, as well as under Louis XV and Louis XVI, should foster an urge to strengthen the recently accomplished work....

There is no more important task. Political passion and partisanship of every shade can produce lengthy books in order to lead public opinion astray; but a work such as Velly's...should have a single continuator. Once this work is published, if it is written competently and in the correct spirit, no one will have the desire or the energy to write another—especially if the police, far from encouraging such an attempt, does everything to discourage it. The opinion expressed by the minister in his Note, which, if it were followed, would leave such a project to private enterprise and to the speculations of some publisher, is erroneous and could lead to regrettable results.

As for the individual who presented the request [to write the continuation], the only question to be examined is whether he possesses the required talent, whether his opinions are sound, and whether the spirit that would guide his researches and his pen may be relied upon.

THE LAWS OF REVOLUTION

{92} [Conversation, 1816] General rule: No social revolution without terror. Every revolution is, by its nature, a revolt which success and the passage of time legitimize but in which terror is one of the inevitable phases....

The French Revolution was a nationwide convulsion as irresistible in its effects as a volcanic eruption. When the mysterious molten substance in the entrails of the earth has reached its explosive point, the lava escapes and the eruption takes place. The hidden travail of the masses follows an identical course: when their sufferings are ripe, they explode in revolution.

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A revolution can be neither made nor stopped. The only thing that can be done is for one or several of its children to give it a direction by dint of victories [over the anti-revolutionists], or else for its enemies to stifle it temporarily by the strength of arms. But in the latter case the revolutionary fire smolders under the ashes, and sooner or later the conflagration flares up again with new vigor and devours all obstacles.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: A VIEW FOR POSTERITY

{93} [Dictation, 1816] The French Revolution was...a general mass movement of the nation against the privileged classes. The French nobility, like that of all Europe, dates from the barbarian invasions which broke up the Roman Empire. In France, the nobles represented the ancient Franks and Burgundians; the rest of the nation, the Gauls. The introduction of the feudal system established the principle that every landed property had a lord. All political rights were exercised by the priests and the nobles. The peasants were enslaved, partly by binding them to the soil.

The progress of civilization and knowledge liberated the people. This new state of affairs caused the prosperity of industry and trade. In the eighteenth century, the larger part of the land, of wealth, and of the fruits of civilization belonged to the people. The nobles, however, still formed a privileged class: they controlled the upper and intermediate courts, they held feudal rights under a great variety of names and forms, they were exempt from contributing to any of the taxes imposed by society, and they had exclusive access to the most honorable employments.

All these abuses stirred the citizens to protest. The chief aim of the Revolution was to destroy all privileges; to abolish manorial courts, justice being an inalienable attribute of the sovereign authority; to suppress all feudal rights as remnants of the people's former slavery; to subject all citizens and all property without distinction to taxation by the State. Finally, the Revolution proclaimed the equality of rights. All citizens could fill all employments, subject only to their talents and the vicissitudes of chance.

The monarchy was made up of provinces annexed to the Crown at various periods....France was not a state but an unamalgamated collection of several states placed side by side. Chance and the events of past centuries had determined the whole. The Revolution, applying its guiding principle of equality to the citizens among themselves as well as to the various territories, destroyed all these petty nations and created a new great nation. There was no more Brittany, no more Normandy, Burgundy, Champagne, Provence, or Lorraine: there was a France....

Whatever had been brought about in the sequence of events since the time of Clovis ceased to exist. These changes were all so favorable to the people that they took hold with the greatest ease: by 1800 there remained not a single memory of the old privileges....In order to trace any existing

institution to its origin all that was necessary was to look up the new law that had established it. Half of the land had changed ownership; the farmers and the bourgeois had become rich. The progress of agriculture, manufactures, and industry passed all our hopes. France offered the spectacle of thirty million inhabitants living within natural limits, farming a single class of citizens governed by a single law, a single organization, a single order. All these changes accorded with the well-being of the nation, with its laws, with justice, and with the spirit of the century.

[Conversation, 1816] The counter-revolution [i.e., the reaction that set in after 1815], even if given a free course, must inevitably come to drown in revolution....For henceforth nothing can destroy or efface the grand principles of our Revolution. These great and noble truths must remain forever, so inextricably are they linked to our splendor, our monuments, our prodigious deeds. We have drowned its earlier shame in floods of glory. These truths are henceforth immortal....They live on in England, they illumine America, they are naturalized in France: from this tripod the light will burst upon the world.

These truths will rule the world. They will be the creed, the religion, the morality of all nations. And, no matter what has been said, this memorable era will be linked to my person, because, after all, I have carried its torch and consecrated its principles, and because persecution now has made me its Messiah.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: PERSONAL VIEWS

{94} [Letter to Lucien, Calvi, Corsica, June 1, 1793] Among so many conflicting ideas and so many different perspectives, the honest man is confused and distressed and the skeptic becomes wicked....Since one must take sides, one might as well choose the side which is victorious, the side

which devastates, loots, and burns. Considering the alternative, it is better to eat than be eaten.

While First Consul, Napoleon went to see Rousseau's grave on Stanislas Girardin's property at Ermenonville. The following dialogue took place according to Girardin's account.

When he reached the poplar island, Bonaparte stepped in front of Jean-Jacques' tomb and said, "It would have been better for the peace of France if this man had never lived."—"And why, Citizen Consul?"—"It was he who prepared the French Revolution."—"I should have thought, Citizen Consul, that it was not for you to complain of the Revolution."—"Well," he replied, "the future will tell us whether it would not have been better if neither I nor Rousseau had ever lived." And he resumed his walk with a thoughtful air.

[Conversation, 1816] Besides, I have singular ideas: I believe that there has been no Revolution, that the men of 1789 were the same as the men of Louis XIV's time....The French character is not base, as foreigners believe, but everything in France is a matter of fashion. Such a one who yesterday was a staunch Bonapartist is a staunch royalist today and will be a staunch republican tomorrow.

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THE POLITICAL ORDER

Constitution! Unconstitutional! Republic! Popular Sovereignty! Big words, big phrases!

So long as I live, I shall rule as I please. My son will have to be a liberal.

ON IDEOLOGIES AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

"Bonaparte made frequent use of the word ideologist," notes Bourrienne's ghost writer, who on occasion puts matters well. "By that he intended to ridicule the men whom he suspected of a tendency toward belief in indefinite perfectibility. He esteemed them for their moral integrity, but he regarded them as dreamers who were looking for a general constitutional pattern applicable to all nations and who, while laboring for the happiness of men, ignored the concrete realities of the human character. According to him, the ideologists held power to be inherent in institutions; he called this metaphysics. To him, all power rested on material strength" (Bourrienne, *Mémoires*, II, 208).

{95} [Conversation, 1803] Well, you're right, it's true that the metaphysicians are my pet aversion. I have classified all these people under the head of ideologists, which, by the way, is peculiarly and literally suited to them: *idea seekers*—hollow ideas, as a rule. Now, the apt application of the term *ideologist* to that class has cast even more ridicule on them than I had dared expect. The expression stuck—I think because it came from me. There's no harm in it. There will be less ideology around....All things considered—and I have given this much thought—those poor scholars (*savants)* don't understand themselves. How could I come to terms with them in order to govern the way they think I ought to? Yes, they have a craze for interfering with my policies! They talk, talk, talk. My aversion for

this breed of ideologists goes to the point of hatred. I don’t care who knows it.

[Reply to the Conseil d'état, December 20, 1812] It is to this ideology, this shady metaphysics which would base political legislation on subtle principles derived from first causes instead of adapting it to our knowledge of human psychology and to historic lessons, that every misfortune experienced by our beautiful France must be attributed. These errors were bound to, and in fact did, bring about the reign of terror by the blood-stained men. Who indeed proclaimed the principle that rebellion was a duty? Who fawned on the people by proclaiming its sovereignty, which it was incapable of exercising? Who destroyed the awe and sanctity of the laws by making them depend, not on the sacred principles of justice, not on the natural order, not on civil law, but merely on the will of an assembly whose members were ignorant of civil, penal, administrative, political, and military laws?

He who has been called upon to regenerate a State must follow absolutely opposite principles. History paints the human heart. In history we must seek the advantages and disadvantages of the various systems of law.

[Conversation, 1816] I take good care not to fall into the error of our modern system mongers: I do not believe that I unite in my person and my ideas the wisdom of the nations. The true wisdom of the nations is experience.

{96} [To Mme de Rémusat, on his part in suppressing the uprising of 13 Vendémiaire (1795) against the Directory] They asked for my advice. I answered, for my part, by asking for guns. This proposal terrified them. The whole night was spent in indecision. Next morning, the news looked very bad. Then they put me in charge of the whole thing, and after that they

began deliberating whether it was right to meet force with force. I asked them, “Are you waiting for the people to give you permission to fire on it?”

[Dictation, Saint Helena, on the Clichy club, a political club under the Directory] The Clichy men gave themselves out as wise and moderate and as good Frenchmen. Were they republicans? No. They were royalists, then? If so, were they in favor of the Constitution of 1791? No. Of that of 1793? Still less. Of that of 1795? Yes and no. What were they, then? They did not know. They would have liked to be one thing, with many *ifs*, and another, with many *buts*.

{97} [Manuscript, 1786] Before pointing out the errors of Jean-Jacques, one should read him.

[Conversation, 1803] Bah! Jean-Jacques! Now that you mention him, let me tell you that in my eyes he is a mere chatterbox—or, if you like that better, a rather eloquent ideologist. I never cared for him and, what is more, I never could quite understand him. It’s true that I didn’t have the courage to read all of him, because he seemed, on the whole, boring.

[Conversation, 1801, on Robert Fulton] Bah! All these inventors, all these project mongers are either schemers or visionaries. Don’t mention him again.

[Conversation, 1802] Monsieur Lafayette is a political monomaniac, a mule. He doesn’t understand. I’m sorry about this, because he’s a decent fellow. I wanted to make him a senator, and he refused. Well, so much the worse for him. I can manage without his vote.

[Conversation, 1800s] Perhaps Lafayette is right in theory—but what is a theory? Mere nonsense, if you want to apply it to human masses. And then, he keeps thinking that he is still in America, as if the French were

Americans! It certainly isn’t he who will teach me what this country needs.

[Conversation, 1804, related in the memoirs of Napoleon’s valet] The prince archchancellor...was discussing with the Emperor a metaphysical point of Kant’s. But the Emperor settled the question by declaring that Kant was obscure and that he did not like him; and he brusquely left the prince.

ON POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

{98} [Manuscript, 1786] Laws are established either by a nation when it submits to a ruler or by the ruler himself. In the first case, the ruler is obliged by the very nature of his office to carry out the agreed-upon laws without exception. In the second case, the laws must serve the end of government, which consists in the peace and well-being of the people. If not, it is evident that the people resumes its original status and that the government, by not furthering the aim of the social compact, dissolves itself. We shall go even further: the compact by which a people places sovereign authority in the hands of some political body is not a contract. That is to say, the people has the right to take back at will the sovereignty which it has transferred. Men in the state of nature do not form a government. In order to establish one, it was necessary for each individual to give his consent to the change. The act constituting such a convention is necessarily a reciprocal contract. All men thus pledged have made the laws. Thus they have been sovereign.

Whether because of the difficulty of assembling frequently or for some other reason, the people eventually transferred its authority to a specific man or body of men. Now, no one is bound by obligations contracted against his will. There are no prior laws that the people (which under any government whatsoever must be regarded as intrinsically sovereign) has not the right to abrogate.

{99} [Message to the legislature, 1803] All change is an evil unless it can be proved beyond any doubt that certain advantages are bound to result.

[Letter, 1810] The people is never in the right as soon as it begins to revolt.

[Letter, 1811] The people must not be judge of its own rights.

{100} [Message to the Senate, 1804] We have been guided at all times by this great truth: that the sovereignty resides in the French people in the sense that everything, everything without exception, must be done for its best interests, for its well-being, and for its glory.

THE REVOLUTION CONSOLIDATED

{101} [Proclamation, December 15, 1799] Citizens, the Revolution has been made fast to the principles that started it. The Revolution is ended.

[Stenographic transcript, Conseil d'état, 1805; subject under discussion: a proposal to maintain feudal rights in the annexed provinces of Piedmont] I say: we have had a jubilee. The social order has been overthrown; the king, who was the apex of all legislation, has been guillotined....Everything has been uprooted....

You cannot undo the past. The annexed territories must be just like France, and if you went on annexing everything as far as Gibraltar and Kamchatka, the laws of France would have to spread there, too. I am pleading the cause of the humble folk; the others never lack good dinners and brilliant drawing rooms that will plead for them.

[Conversation, 1816] In this gigantic struggle between the present and the past, I am the natural arbiter and mediator. I tried to be its supreme judge. My whole internal administration, my whole foreign policy were determined by that great aim.

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, VANITY

{102} [Conversation, 1803] I have come to realize that men are not born to be free.

[Conversation, 1804] Liberty means a good civil code. The only thing modern nations care for is property.

[Conversation, 1800s] Liberty is a need felt by a small class of people whom nature has endowed with nobler minds than the mass of men. Consequently, it may be repressed with impunity. Equality, on the other hand, pleases the masses.

[Conversation, 1800s] In Paris—and Paris means France—people are unable to take an interest in things unless they also take an interest in persons. The old monarchic way of life has accustomed us to personify everything. This would be a bad state of affairs for a people that seriously desires liberty. But the French are unable to desire anything seriously except, perhaps, equality. Even so, they would gladly renounce it if everyone could entertain the hope of rising to the top. Equality in the sense that everyone will be master—there you have the secret of all your vanities. What must be done, then, is to give everybody the hope of being able to rise.

{103} [Conversation, 1815] My motto has always been: A career open to all talents, without distinctions of birth.

[Conversation, 1816] Democracy, if it is reasonable, limits itself to giving everyone an equal opportunity to compete and to obtain.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] Concerning the Legion of Honor, the Emperor said, among other things, that the variety and the specialization of the old orders of chivalry tended to strengthen caste

divisions, whereas the single decoration of the Legion of Honor and the universality of its application was the symbol of equality. The old orders kept the classes divided, while the new decoration ought to bring about the cohesion of the citizen body. Its influence, its effects within the national family might become incalculable: it was the common center, the universal incentive of all the diverse ambitions.

{104} [Conversation, early 1800s] It is very easy to govern the French through vanity.

[Conversation, 1800] When a Frenchman is torn between fear of a policeman and fear of the devil, he will side with the devil. But when he is caught between the devil and fashion, he will obey fashion.

{105} [Letter to his brother Jérôme, then king of Westphalia, 1807] What the peoples of Germany desire most impatiently is that talented commoners should have the same right to your esteem and to public employments as the nobles, that any trace of serfdom and of an intermediate hierarchy between the sovereign and the lowest class of the people should be completely abolished. The benefits of the Code Napoléon, the publicity of judicial procedure, the creation of juries must be so many distinguishing marks of your monarchy. And, if I may give you my whole opinion, I count more firmly on their effects for the enlargement and consolidation of your kingdom than on the results of even the greatest military victories. Your people must enjoy a degree of freedom, equality, and prosperity unknown to the people of the Germanies, and this liberal regime must produce, in one way or another, the most salutary changes affecting the politics of the Confederation of the Rhine and the power of your monarchy. This manner of governing will give you a more powerful shield against Prussia than the Elbe, fortifications, and French protection. What nation would wish to

return under the arbitrary Prussian government once it had tasted the benefits of a wise and liberal administration? The peoples of Germany, the peoples of France, of Italy, of Spain all desire equality and liberal ideas. I have guided the affairs of Europe for many years now, and I have had occasion to convince myself that the buzzing of the privileged classes is contrary to the general opinion. Be a constitutional king.

MONARCHY, REPUBLIC, ANARCHY, DESPOTISM

{106} [Manuscript, 1791] In the past, an unprejudiced writer could have doubts as to which form of government was to be preferred, the republican or the monarchic; but I believe that today his doubts must have been dispelled. Insults, calumnies, and threats are being thrown at the republicans...and no reason is given except that a republic is impossible in France....Truly, the monarchist orators have greatly contributed to the fall of the monarchy, for after wasting all their breath on futile analyses, they invariably end up by saying that the republican form of government is impossible because it is impossible.

[Conversation, 1816] I am of the opinion that France should have no constitution: she is an essentially monarchic country.

{107} [Speech to both chambers, June 7, 1815] It is my ambition to see France enjoying the greatest possible degree of freedom. I say *possible*, because anarchy inevitably leads back to absolutism.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] The Emperor then made the statement that the extreme limit of government by many was anarchy, the extreme limit of government by one, despotism; that undoubtedly the best choice would lie in the middle road, if only human wisdom were able to follow it. And he made the remark that these truths had become hackneyed without being in the least observed.

[Same conversation, direct quotation] There is no such thing as absolute despotism. All despotism is relative. One man cannot absorb another with impunity. If a sultan has his subjects' heads cut off because of some whim, he is likely to lose his own head, and in the same manner. All excess must overflow in one direction or another: what the ocean invades in one place it loses in another. And then there are certain customs, certain traditions, against which all power comes to nought. When I was in Egypt, conqueror, lord, and absolute master though I was, laying down the law to the population by simple decrees, I should not have dared to order the houses to be searched, and it would have been beyond my power to prevent the population from speaking freely in the coffeehouses. They were freer and more independent in their speech than the Parisians. Though they submitted to slavery in everything else, they meant to be free in that respect. The coffeehouses were the castles of their rights, the market places of their opinions.

"THE SWORD AND THE SPIRIT"

{108} [Conseil d'état, 1806] Up to now the world has known only two powers, the military and the ecclesiastic....The monks are the natural enemies of the military and have functioned as a bulwark against them more than once....Perhaps the monks are not quite so useless as is believed in our times.

[Conversation, 1808] Do you know what I admire most in this world? It's the total inability of force to organize anything. There are only two powers in the world—the sword and the spirit. By spirit I understand the civil and religious institutions....In the long run, the sword is always beaten by the spirit.

{109} [Conseil d'état, 1802] In every country, force yields to civic

qualities. Bayonets are lowered before the priest who speaks in the name of Heaven and before the scholar who inspires respect for his science. I have predicted to certain military men, who had scruples, that military rule will never take root in France, unless the nation were stultified by fifty years of ignorance. All attempts will fail, and their authors will be the victims. I do not govern in the capacity of general but by virtue of the civil qualities which in the eyes of the nation qualify me for the government. If the nation did not hold this opinion, the government would not last. I knew what I was doing when, as army commander, I styled myself “Member of the Institute”; I was sure of being understood by the last drummer boy.

We must not apply the lessons of the barbarian eras to our present times. We are thirty million men united by civilization, property, and commerce. Against this mass, three or four hundred thousand soldiers are nothing. A general owes his command exclusively to his civic qualities; but aside from this, as soon as his active employment ceases, he returns to civilian status. Even the soldiers are merely the sons of citizens. The army means the nation. Looking at the army without taking these relationships into account, one would become convinced that it knows no law but force, that it looks only to its own needs, that it sees only itself. The civilian, on the contrary, sees only the common good. The distinguishing mark of the military is to want everything despotically; that of the civilian is the desire to subject everything to discussion, to the criteria of truth and reason. Each looks through his own prism, which often misleads him. Nevertheless, discussion gives birth to light. If men were classified into military and civilians, the result would be the establishment of two orders, whereas there is only one nation.

{110} [Conversation, 1800] If I died of fever three or four years from now, in my bed, and if to conclude the tale of my life I made a last will, I should

tell the nation to beware of a militarist government: I should advise it to choose a civilian magistrate.

[Conversation, 1816] In the last analysis, in order to rule one must be a soldier: without spurs and boots, no government.

ON CONSTITUTIONS

{111} [Letter to Talleyrand, 1797] The English constitution is merely a charter of privileges.

[Conseil d'état, 1804] The claims put forward by the Senate are echoes of the English constitution; but nothing differs more from France than England. The Frenchman lives under a clear sky, drinks fiery and heady wines, and eats food which excites the activity of his senses. The Englishman, on the contrary, lives in a humid climate, under an almost frigid sun, drinks beer or porter, and consumes great quantities of dairy products. The blood of the two nations is not composed of the same elements, and thus their characters could not be the same either. The French are vain, light-hearted, daring, and, above all, enamored of equality. They have been observed, in all epochs of history, to make war on superiority of rank and fortune. The English are proud rather than vain, they are by nature grave, and they direct their attacks not at frivolous distinctions but at serious abuses. They are more eager to preserve their own rights than to usurp those of others. Englishmen are at once proud and humble, independent and obedient. It is unthinkable to give identical institutions to such dissimilar nations. Who, in France, would safeguard the powers of the parliament against a monarch disposing of an army of four hundred thousand men—an army which he is compelled to maintain at all times because of his country’s geographical situation?

[Conversation, 1816] Although the English constitution contains odious,

outdated, and ignoble details, it nevertheless presents the singular phenomenon of producing a beneficial and noble result. Through this result and the benefits it confers, the constitution secures the loyalty of the multitude, which fears their loss. But is it to the objectionable nature of its details that the constitution owes this result? No, on the contrary, the constitution is tarnished by it, and its lustre would be far brighter if this great and beautiful mechanism got rid of such parasitical vices.

{112} [Conversation, 1800] My policy is to govern men the way the great majority wants to be governed. This, I believe, is the only way in which it is possible to acknowledge the sovereignty of the people. By making myself Catholic I brought the war in the Vendée to an end. By becoming a Moslem I established myself in Egypt. By acting ultra-montane I won the minds of the Italians. If I governed a nation of Jews, I should restore the temple of Solomon. Thus I shall talk freedom in the free part of Santo Domingo; I shall confirm slavery in the Ile de France [Mauritius] and even in the slave part of Santo Domingo—with the reservation that I shall soften and limit slavery wherever I maintain it and shall restore order and discipline wherever I maintain freedom.

In 1802 the Swiss, in order to put an end to the chronic convulsions of the Helvetic Republic, sent a deputation to Paris and asked the First Consul to mediate between their irreconcilable factions. Napoleon’s Act of Mediation (1803) represented a compromise between the new and the old. A mediation between political factions, it also justified his claim of having mediated between past and present.

In the course of the negotiations, Napoleon addressed several long and pregnant messages to the Swiss deputies. The following three excerpts are taken from them.

{113} [1802] The federal system is contrary to the interests of large countries, because it leads to the fragmentation of their power; but it is very advantageous in small countries, because it preserves their natural vigor in its entirety.

[1803] You might have introduced a unified administration into your country if that course had been recommended by the natural disposition of your social components, by historical factors, and by your relations with foreign powers. But these three categories of powerful influences have led you to precisely the opposite system. A form of government that is not the result of a long sequence of shared experiences, efforts, and endeavors can never take root. Temporary conditions and momentary needs may recommend an opposite system and even lead to its adoption; but it never lasts.

[1803; on the democratic cantons, i.e., the small cantons which were—and still are—governed by *Landsgemeinden*, or popular assemblies of the entire adult male population] The restoration of the old order of things in the democratic cantons is the most suitable solution for both you and me. It is the democratic cantons, it is their form of government, which makes you unique in the world and which makes you interesting in the eyes of Europe. Without these democracies, you would have nothing to show that cannot be found elsewhere. You would have no individual color. Keep well in mind how important it is to have individual features: they alone prevent the notion of your resembling other nations in any way; they alone protect you from being confused with other countries or from being incorporated into them.

I know very well that the government of these democracies entails many disadvantages and that it does not stand up to critical examination. But,

after all, it has been established for centuries; it has its origins in the climate, the nature, the needs, and the primitive customs of the inhabitants; it conforms to the local genius, and one should never argue reason against necessity. The constitutions of the small cantons are irrational, to be sure, but custom has confirmed them. When custom and reason are at odds, custom always wins out.

You would like to abolish or to limit the *Landsgemeinden;* but, if so, you no longer should speak of democracies and republics. Free nations have never tolerated any attempt to deprive them of the direct exercise of their sovereignty. They neither know nor care for the modern invention of representative government, which destroys the essential attributes of a republic. The only limitation permissible to legislators is the kind of restriction which, without taking away from the people the semblance of directly exercising its sovereignty, apportions political influence according to education and property.

In Rome, the ballots were counted by classes. The last class comprised the whole mass of the proletarians, while the first classes contained a bare few hundred wealthy and illustrious citizens. But the populace was no less satisfied and did not feel that immense difference, simply because its vanity was flattered by the votes it was allowed to cast, which, counted all together, amounted to no more than the votes of a few Roman nobles. Besides, why would you deprive those herdsmen of the only pastime they have?

The draft of the French Constitution of 1799 contained an article which proposed a limited tenure for the senators. Napoleon crossed it out, making the following comment.

{114} There is a great deal of metaphysics in all this, and that is not exactly

what we need. In order to concentrate a government whose radical vice until now has been a perpetual vacillation, we must at the very least create a fixed and immovable basis.

[Conseil d'état, 1803] When creating a new government, it is important not to tie one’s hands by laws that are too detailed. Constitutions are the work of time, and it is impossible to leave too wide an opening for improvements.

[Stenographic transcript, Conseil d'état, 1804] *The Emperor:* All of us are representatives of the nation. The first representative of the nation is the Emperor.

The Emperor, the Senate, the Conseil d'état, the Legislative Body, and the Tribunate together make up the entire governmental machinery. Together, they can do anything they like. They represent the nation. The Emperor, who is the head of all, is hereditary because a choice has to be made among various disadvantages, and there are fewer disadvantages in his being hereditary than in his being elective—otherwise he would be elective.

The Grand Judge: Beginning in 1789, the king was styled the “hereditary representative.”

The Archtreasurer: Properly speaking, the representatives of the nation are those whom it has chosen and who hold its mandate.

The Emperor: Bah! These are notions of ‘89!

[Letter to the president of the Legislative Body of the kingdom of Italy, 1805] It is a political principle of mine to make use of the wisdom of all the intermediate bodies—be they the Consultative Council, the Legislative Council, the Legislative Body, or even the various electoral colleges—every

time that they share my intentions and follow in my steps. But every time they introduce into their deliberations mere factionalism and turbulence, or projects that are contrary to those I may have meditated for the happiness and prosperity of my subjects, their efforts will be powerless. The entire blame will rest on them; and I, in spite of them, shall carry out all my designs and bring to a conclusion whatever operations I have deemed necessary to the functioning of my government and to the success of my grand project of reconstituting and rendering illustrious the kingdom of Italy.

[Conseil d'état, 1808] There is not a single constitution in the world that is actually observed. Everything around us changes continually. The government of England has fallen into the hands of some forty families; this oligarchy had no difficulty in dictating the law to the House of Brunswick, who are foreigners—but this cannot last. Things are no more solidly settled in France. A corporal could seize the power in a moment of crisis—the constitution does not give the government enough power, and where the government is weak, the army governs. A legislative body should not have the power to stop the government by refusing it taxes; taxes, once established, should be susceptible of being levied by simple decrees. It is impossible to remain in between sessions without a way to make laws when circumstances make them necessary. The court of appeals regards my decrees as laws, otherwise there would be no government.

“LE TRÔNE, C’EST MOI”

{115} [Letter to Louis, king of Holland, 1809] You must understand that I make no distinction between myself and my predecessors; that, from Clovis to the Committee of Public Safety, I consider myself in solidarity with everything that has been done; and that whatever may be lightly said against

the governments that preceded me I consider to have been said with the intention of offending me. I know that it has become the fashion, among certain people, to praise me and to disparage France: but those who do not love France do not love me; those who speak ill of my subjects I hold to be my worst enemies.

[To a deputation of the Legislative Body, which he had just dissolved, December 31, 1813] Do you not know that, in a monarchy, the throne and the person of the monarch are inseparable? What is a throne? A piece of lumber covered with a velvet rug. But in the language of monarchy, I am the throne!

[Concluding remarks of the same speech, according to another source. The last sentence, though denied by some, was later cited by Napoleon himself] Supposing even that I am at fault, you should not have reproached me in public. Dirty linen should he washed in private. Besides, France needs me more than I need France.

During the Hundred Days, Napoleon needed France somewhat more than she needed him. For that reason, he liberalized the imperial constitution through the Acte Additionnel of April 22, 1815, which provided for a more independent legislature, freedom of the press, and certain civil rights borrowed from the first ten amendments to the American Constitution. “Henceforth our sole aim,” said the Preamble, “is to increase the prosperity of France by strengthening public liberty.” Seven months later, on Saint Helena, he said to Gourgaud:

{116} Perhaps I was wrong in forming the legislative chambers [through the Acte Additionnel], I thought they would be useful to me and procure me such means as I would have lacked if I had remained a dictator. I was wrong to waste precious time on busying myself with the constitution, all the more

so since I intended to send the chambers packing once I was victorious and safe.

"A SINGLE PARTY AND A SINGLE WILL"

{117} [Newspaper editorial, 1801, on the "ideologist" opposition in the Tribunate] They are a dozen or fifteen men and think they are a party. Their endless ravings they call oratory....Infernal machines have been set against the First Consul, knives have been sharpened, impotent plots have been fomented. Add to this, if you will, the sarcasms and the insane notions of twelve or fifteen befogged metaphysicians. Against this handful of enemies he will pit the people of France.

[Conseil d'état, 1802] The opposition in England is completely harmless. Its members are not partisans. They do not long for either feudalism or Jacobinism. Their influence is legitimately owed to their talents, and they merely try to sell themselves to the Crown. With us, it is quite different. Here the opposition consists of the Jacobins and of the ex-privileged classes. Those people do not merely compete for positions or money: the former want their clubs back, the latter the old regime. There is a great difference between free discussion in a country whose institutions are long established and the opposition in a country that is still unsettled.

[Conversation, 1803] *The First Consul* (in his bathtub): An opposition, as in England, is that it? I haven't been able to understand yet what good there is in an opposition. Whatever it may be, its only result is to diminish the prestige of authority in the eyes of the people.

Joseph Bonaparte: It's easy to see that you don't like it; you have taken good care of it.

The First Consul: Let another govern in my place, and if he doesn't, like

me, make an effort to silence the talkers, he'll see what will happen to him. As for me, let me tell you that in order to govern well one needs absolute unity of power. I won't shout this from the roof tops, since I mustn't frighten a lot of people who would raise loud cries of despotism, if they were allowed to talk, and who would write about it, if they were allowed to write. But I have begun to put good order into all this.

{118} [Proclamation, 19 Brumaire, Year VIII/ November 10, 1799] I have refused to be the man of any party.

[Repeated saying, 1799] I have opened up a vast road. He who marches straight ahead shall be safe. He who strays to the right or to the left shall be punished.

[Instructions to an ambassador, 1803] In France there is but a single party and a single will.

[Conversation, 1816] Who ever heard me ask, throughout the years I was in power, to what party anyone belonged, or ever had belonged to, or what he had said, done, or written? Let them imitate me! I always was known to have but one question, one aim: "Do you want to be Frenchmen with me?" And if they said yes, I pushed everyone into a defile of granite rock, closed off to the right and to the left, where he was forced to march on to the other end—and there I stood, pointing to the honor, glory, and splendor of the fatherland.

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LAW AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Outside the established order there is no salvation for the happiness and glory of France.

Public morality is founded on justice; and justice, far from excluding vigorous action, is rather its product.

ON PUBLIC MORALITY

{119} [Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] “Immorality,” said the Emperor, “is undoubtedly the most fatal defect in a sovereign, for it never fails to set a fashionable example....Public morality, on the other hand, is the natural complement of all legislation: it is in itself a whole code.” And he asserted that the Revolution, in spite of all its horrors, had nonetheless been the true cause of our moral regeneration. “Just as the vilest dunghills feed the noblest plants.” Nor did he doubt that his administration would be remembered as the era when morality returned....

“It may be possible to arrest the surge of progress or to throttle it, but not to destroy it....In order to bring back the scandals and turpitudes of past eras...it would be necessary also to bring back all the conditions of these times. This is impossible. It would be necessary to restore to absolute idleness the upper class, which could find its only activity in licentious sexual relations. In the middle class, you would have to destroy that industrial ferment which nowadays excites everyone’s imagination, enlarges all ideas, and exalts all souls. And the lowest class would have to be plunged back into the vile and degraded condition that had reduced it to the status of beasts of burden. Now, all this is impossible. Public morality, then, is on the rise, and it may be predicted that it will gradually improve all over the globe.”

THE PRINCIPLES OF LAW

{120} [Conversation, 1801] The grand order that rules the entire world must also regulate each of its parts. At the center of a society, like the sun, is the government; the various institutions must revolve around it without ever straying from their orbits. Thus the government must regulate the mechanism of each institution in such a manner that all concur in preserving the general harmony. In the system of the universe, nothing is left to chance; in the social system, nothing must be left to individual caprice.

[Conseil d'état, 1800s] The objection has been made to the draft law on adoption that...it would be contrary to the child’s freedom to deprive him of his natural father without his consent.

Do you not know that in a state of society it is the law that makes the father? That virtually not a single human activity is determined by the simple impulse of man’s will? From childhood on we live under the sway of laws and habits.

[Conseil d'état, 1800s] Nothing should be made into a general rule unless it conforms to the public interest; whatever serves mere private interest should be permitted only by an exceptional decision of the public authority.

{121} [Conseil d'état, 1806] The law must be limited to general principles. To provide for all its possible applications would be a futile endeavor. Experience would prove that many of them have been overlooked, and respect for the law would prevent any magistrate from speaking for the law when it is silent. Justice would be the loser. It must be left to the government to enact the details by means of executive rulings. The government can, without any inconvenience, grope its way and draw its rules from experience. There is no reason why, after three or four years, those among the rulings whose wisdom has been proved by experience

should not be converted into definitive laws.

[Message to the Senate, 1806] The history of all eras teaches us that uniformity of laws is essentially harmful to the strength and good organization of empires if it goes beyond the limits prescribed by national customs or geographic considerations.

[Reported saying] The First Consul used to say that one should never attempt to forbid what one lacks the power to prevent—that the public authority would risk far less in reforming a defective law than in tolerating its violation.

[Conversation, 1816] Laws, which in theory are the prototype of clarity, only too often lead to a veritable chaos in their application. Indeed, men and their passions disfigure whatever they touch....One cannot escape the arbitrariness of judges except by placing oneself under the despotism of the law....I used to dream that it was possible to reduce laws to simple geometric propositions, so that anyone who could read and connect two ideas should be able to state the law, but I realized almost right away that this was an absurd ideality. However, I should have liked to start from a fixed point, to follow a single road that was known to everybody, to have no other laws than those written down in the code, and to proclaim once and for all that whatever was not in the code was null and void. But with lawyers it is not easy to arrive at simplicity. First, they will prove to you that it is impossible, a veritable chimera; then they will try to prove that it even is incompatible with the safety and existence of public authority. Authority, they say, stands alone and constantly faces everybody’s improvised machinations: thus it needs weapons which it can keep in reserve for unforeseen cases. So that, what with the help of some edicts of Chilperic and Pharamond that may be unearthed if convenient, nobody can

say for sure that he is safe from being duly and legally hanged.

“BETWEEN DUE PROCESS AND ARBITRARINESS”

{122} [Conseil d'état, 1800s] Between due process and arbitrariness there is no middle ground.

[Letter to Fouché, January 15, 1806] I do not intend that Frenchmen should become slaves. In France, everything that is not forbidden is permitted, nor can anything be forbidden except by the laws, by the courts, or, when morals and public order are concerned, by general police measures. I say it once more: I do not want any censorship [of books], because every bookseller is made responsible for the works he sells, because I do not wish to take responsibility for every nonsense that comes off the printing press, and, finally, because I do not want some clerk to tyrannize over the mind and to mutilate genius.{123}

In 1807 General Cervoni, commanding the military region of Marseilles, published the following order:

“Any person who, one month after the publication of this order, is found carrying arms on his person shall be imprisoned in the fortress of Saint-Jean in Marseilles. Any brigand arrested carrying weapons shall be court-martialed.” (The designation “brigand” was liberally applied at that period to members of the royalist underground resistance in western France and in Provence.)

In a letter dated from Osterode (East Prussia), March 7, 1807, Napoleon made the following comments on the order.

If it is permissible to say that any Frenchman who possesses a weapon may be deprived of his freedom, then why not say as well that he shall be sentenced to serve as a galley slave? When the penalty has been imposed on

him, who shall order its execution? Not a court—for the courts do not make decisions based on the orders of prefects. It will be the prefect, then, who will both promulgate and execute the law. Thus the prefect will be at once the legislator, the judge, and the executor of his judgments. If prefects were granted the right to order the citizens' houses searched, where would be the limits of their powers? Who would prevent them from ordering that any citizen who does not go to Mass, who takes walks at such and such an hour, who does not do this or that, must undergo such and such a penalty? Thus the safety and freedom of the citizens will be threatened by the zeal or the arbitrariness of a single administrator.

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But is it not a grave mistake to inflict infamy on a citizen by forbidding him to carry arms? Every nobleman formerly possessed that right. Today, every domiciled Frenchman, every citizen who by his private life pledges his loyal conduct to society, is a nobleman.

{124} [Letter, 1791] Laws are like the statues of certain divinities which are veiled on certain occasions.

Late in December, 1800, royalist conspirators exploded an infernal machine which killed several bystanders and ruined several houses but failed to blow up the carriage in which Napoleon was riding to the Opéra. Without any evidence, and against Fouché's opinion, the First Consul decided that the plot was the work of the Jacobins, and against the Jacobins he proceeded with unseemly haste. The Conseil d'état, however, correctly suspecting the royalists to be the real culprits, engaged Napoleon in debate. Napoleon's reply is memorable.

[Conseil d'état, 1801] I suppose that the authors of the crime are a different set from the wretches we are discussing here. This does not change

the fact that they [the Jacobins] have been plotting for the past year, that they have committed every crime, that they are abhorred by the French, that they give the government no peace, and that they have been involved in every single similar plot discovered in the past year. All the police reports are full of their doings. Thus it is permissible to examine the question whether, apart from any direct complicity with the authors of the attempt of the 3 Nivôse, the public interest does not require these people to be deported.

It was essentially on the strength of the same reasoning that the duc d'Enghien was kidnaped and shot in 1804. The doctrine has become commonplace since. A similarly elastic interpretation was placed by the First Consul on his own law code in 1803, when his brother Lucien married against Napoleon's will. The notary who had registered the marriage contract was summoned to the Tuileries, and the following dialogue took place.

Bonaparte: Was it you, sir, who registered my brother's act of marriage?

Notary: Yes, Citizen First Consul.

Bonaparte: Apparently you were unaware of his being my brother?

Notary: No, Citizen First Consul.

Bonaparte: You did not know, then, that my consent was necessary to validate the act?

Notary: I do not think so. Your brother has been of age for some time. He has held important offices. He has been cabinet minister and ambassador. He has no father. Thus he is free to enter into any contract.

Bonaparte: But he has a mother, whose consent he needed.

Notary: No, he is of age and he acted of his free will.

Bonaparte: But I am the sovereign and, as such, my consent was needed.

Notary: You are the sovereign for a ten-year term only,{125} and there is no law making your family accountable to you.

Bonaparte: Show me that marriage act.

Notary: Here it is.

(The First Consul read the act and, shutting the register, almost tore the page on which it was entered.)

Bonaparte: I'll have this act annulled.

Notary: This will be difficult, because it is in due form and every possibility is foreseen.

Bonaparte: Go away!

(The notary withdrew with his register. He had not lost his composure for an instant.)

In 1810 Napoleon took a decisive step toward despotism by instituting state prisons in which political offenders could be detained without a regular court procedure. Anxious to save his reputation as a liberal, he commented as follows in his memoirs, dictated on Saint Helena.

{126} Napoleon desired the strict execution of the law which prescribed that, in all ordinary cases, persons should be handed over to a magistrate within twenty-four hours from their arrest. In extraordinary cases, determined by the nature of circumstances, their exceptional status could not be prolonged beyond one year, and in that case their detention had to be ordered by a privy council of sixteen persons acting on the report of the chief of police. This administrative ruling may have been the object of

thoughtless criticism. A great deal of superficial talk goes on at social gatherings. Perhaps the name [state prisons] was a mistake. Those eight establishments should have been called “executive prisons for persons under general surveillance.”

Surely, if ever there was an “exceptional” case, it was that of Napoleon after his surrender to Captain Maitland of the *Bellerophon.* Napoleon, however, did not think so.

[Letter to Admiral Lord Keith, August 7, 1815] My lord, I have requested and still am requesting the benefits of your laws, notably that of *habeas corpus.* After placing myself under your flag and entering your roadsteads, with the offers and promises of the captain [Maitland], I cannot be torn away from there, deprived of my freedom, and deported, except by the due process of your laws.

NAPOLEON VERSUS LAISSER FAIRE

{127} [Conseil d'état, 1806] The famous adage, *Laisser faire, laisser passer,* would be dangerous if literally applied. This maxim must be practiced with moderation and discernment.

[Conversation, 1816] If there were a monarchy made of granite, the abstractions of the economists{128} would be enough to reduce it to dust.

{129} [Letter, 1801] It is generally desired here [in Flanders] that our ladies put fine linens back into fashion and not give an absolute preference to muslins. Since we wish to revive one of our most important industries, one that we possess exclusively, and thus give work to a large number of French families, it would indeed be a good idea to put cambrics back into fashion. Besides, have our fine linens not been in disgrace long enough?

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] The conversation having

reached the subject of fashions and clothes, the Emperor said that once he wanted to forbid the use of cotton in France in order to encourage the cambric and lawn industries of our Flemish towns. Empress Josephine rebelled and made loud outcries: the project had to be abandoned.

ON PUBLIC DEBTS

{130} [Dictation, Saint Helena, on the financial condition of France in 1797] The most important thing, in Napoleon's opinion, was to honor the public trust and to extinguish the debt by appropriating to that purpose any kind of national domains...and to push that measure so vigorously that within three years the national debt would be wiped out. He thought that at the same time the following principle should be submitted to popular referendum and be transformed into a constitutional law: that a generation cannot be committed by a previous generation and that interest on loans could be exacted only for the first fifteen years. This would have prevented the abuse to which that resource [public loans] can be put, and it would have protected the future generations from the greed of the present one.

[Conversation, December, 1812] In England everything is based on something imaginary. Her credit depends entirely on confidence, since she has no surety to cover it—although I admit that the [English] government has something better than that, since the individual fortunes are linked to that of the State. The system of successive loans, which continually tie the present to the past, in a manner compels confidence in the future. By giving every individual proprietor a stake in the wealth of the State, the government creates something better than a material surety, which it lacks: for it thereby creates an unlimited surety resting on individual self-interest.

[Speech to the Legislative Body, 1813] We shall face the crisis without resorting to a loan, which would consume the future, and without paper

money, which is the greatest enemy of the social order.

ON THE BANK OF FRANCE

In 1800 Napoleon founded the now venerable Bank of France. Its basic functions have changed with the times, but some of Napoleon's views on its operations are still of interest. It must be pointed out that the Bank of France, though an official institution, is not a state bank but a semiprivate organization.

{131} [Note, 1808] A bank is founded for the purpose of reducing the interest rate and of maintaining it at the lowest possible level. As a general proposition it may be said that the prosperity of industry and commerce is inseparable from moderate interest rates. Bankers and, to use a popular term, money merchants often allow their operations to be invaded by practices which are departures from that purpose. A government bank can neutralize these schemes by means of well-directed discounts, and it is their duty thus to channel the operations of the bankers themselves toward the aim of public usefulness. Whatever tends to reduce interest rates is in harmony with the spirit of the Bank of France.

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It is indispensable for the Bank to have a reserve fund of gold coin in order to fulfill its primary function—the immediate conversion of bank notes into coin upon presentation by the bearer. But it would be absurd if the Bank were to keep all or the major part of its capital in reserve for the purpose of thus functioning as a material sign, for in that case the Bank would make no use of its privilege. It would lose its usefulness by not taking advantage of its right to create, through its own money issues, new instruments of discount and new values. The Bank would be reduced to the role of the ordinary discount houses, and it would be the loser, since it

discounts at a lower rate than they, while its huge administration requires much larger outlays.

The quota of the gold reserve which the Bank must keep out of circulation cannot be calculated absolutely. However, supposing that the Bank has discounted only at the regular rates, and only such papers as are, by their nature, susceptible of being discounted by the Bank, experience has shown that it should have a gold reserve no larger than one fourth or one third of the bank notes in circulation. Whatever the Bank is now withholding beyond that quota is inactive and unproductive capital.

[Letter to the minister of the public treasury, 1810] I have received your letter of May 8. What you ought to tell the governor of the Bank of France, what the board of directors ought to write in letters of gold on the walls of their meeting room is this:

What is the purpose of the Bank of France? To discount all the paper of every commercial firm in France at four percent per annum.

ON SPECULATORS AND PROFITEERS

{132} [Conversation, 1801] It seems that trading in securities is the business of every Parisian except such as actually own property. In effect, all that those so-called buyers and sellers do is bet with one another on the prevailing market prices on such and such a date. As a consequence, every one of them, in order to win his bet, takes it into his head to guide the destinies of Europe so as to conform with his aims. Everybody invents facts, comments on facts, disfigures facts; everybody worms his way into the councils and cabinets of ministers, into the secrets of the courts; everybody pumps the ambassadors, disposes of war and peace, and stirs up and misleads public opinion, which is so eager for news and for lies, especially in France, that the more a man deceives it the more he is

believed. And this scandalous influence is exerted not only by that crowd of adventurers known as speculators: even the stockbrokers, who are debarred from speculating on their own account, abuse their positions and make deals for their own profit. Often they act against the interests of those they call their clients. If for no other motive but the good of public morality, this abuse must be stopped; and there are many other motives. The rights of freedom cease where abuses begin.

ON THE ARISTOCRACY

{133} [Conversation, 1816] Democracy establishes sovereignty; aristocracy alone preserves it.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] There always exists an aristocracy, regardless of nations and revolutions. If you suppress it in the nobility, it immediately transfers itself to the rich and powerful families of the bourgeoisie. If you rout it out there, it rides out the flood and takes refuge in factory foremen and popular leaders. A ruler gains nothing by such shifts of the aristocracy; he restores order to everything by letting it subsist in its natural state and by reconstituting the old houses on the basis of new principles.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] In establishing a hereditary nobility, Napoleon had three aims: (1) to reconcile France with Europe; (2) to reconcile the old France with the new; (3) to wipe out in Europe the remnants of feudalism by associating the idea of nobility with that of public service and dissociating it from any feudal concept.

[Conversation, 1816] I repeat it again: I have done either too much or too little. I should have won over the émigré nobles as soon as they returned. It would have been easy to make the aristocrats adore me, and I certainly needed an aristocracy. It is the true, the only support of a monarchy, its moderator, its lever, its stronghold. Without it, the State is a rudderless ship,

a balloon drifting in the air. Now, the advantage, the magic of an aristocracy lies in its antiquity, in time—and these were the only things I could not create.

ON THE RIGHTS OF PROPERTY

The following remarks were made by Napoleon in the Conseil d'état during the early years of the Empire.

{134} Property is the fundamental basis of any political association.

What is the right of property? It is the right not only to use but also to abuse.

There are general rules laid down in the interest of society which no property owner has the right to break on the pretext that he has the right to use and abuse things. For instance, I would not tolerate that any individual should render unproductive twenty square leagues of wheat-producing land in order to create a park for himself. The right to abuse does not extend to the point of depriving the people of its subsistence.

[Concerning safety in mines] It is better to allow private interest to take care of this matter than to establish supervision by engineers. A government is in grave error if it wants to be too paternal. By dint of solicitude it destroys freedom and property.

All legislation must favor the property owner. He must find his profit in putting to use his property; otherwise he will abandon his enterprises. He must be given great freedom of action, for whatever hinders the free use of property irks the citizen.

MAN'S ECONOMIC BIRTHRIGHT

{135} [Manuscript, 1791] Man is entitled by birthright to a share of the

earth’s produce sufficient to fill the needs of his existence.

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Here you see the two known extremes of the social chain. That the rich should be at the one end, I have no objection to that, gentlemen: but the last link must not be occupied by wretched poverty. Let them be small farmers, shopkeepers, or skilled workers, who, by moderate work, can feed and clothe and house their families.

To this end you will warn the legislator not to sanction laws that would enable a few to own everything. The lawgiver must solve his political problem in such a way that even the poorest own something. By this he does not introduce equality, for the two extremes are so far apart, the gap is so wide, that there is room for inequality in the interval. Whether he lives in a hut or a palace, clothed in skins or in brocade, eating as frugally as Cincinnatus or as richly as Vitellius, man can achieve happiness—provided only, to be sure, that he really has that hut, those skins, those frugal meals.

ON THE WORKING CLASS

{136} [Incident, Saint Helena, 1815, related by Las Cases] Several slaves carrying heavy crates crossed our path. Mrs. Balcombe told them angrily to make room, when the Emperor intervened by saying, “Respect for the burden, Madam!”

[Conversation, 1817, reported in English] You must consider that the rabble, as you call them, are the bulk of the people. They, and not the nobles, form the nation. When the rabble gains the day, it ceases to be rabble. It is then called the nation. If it does not—why, then some are executed, and they are called rabble, rebels, robbers, and so forth. Thus goes the world.

{137} [Letter, 1811] Good and decent people must be protected and persuaded by gentle means, but the rabble must be led by terror.

{138} [Conversation, 1800s] When the workers are unemployed, they are at the mercy of any schemer. They can be stirred to rebellion. I fear insurrections when they are caused by hunger: I would be less afraid of a battle against an army of two hundred thousand.

[Dictation, 1805: Note to the minister of the interior, Cretet] Our workhouses are full of beggars and of men who could be employed in useful projects. At the same time, many departments are still infested with beggars and vagrants. Yet we need workers at nearly all the places where large-scale public works are in progress. They are needed at Cherbourg, in the swamps at Rochefort, at Fort Boyard. Could not these men be militarily enrolled in the following manner?...His Majesty desires M. Cretet to let him know his opinion of a draft decree based on the following points:

1. Four pioneer battalions are to be formed; they will be organized by the minister of the interior.

2....Only the officers and non-commissioned officers will be armed. The pioneers will carry no weapons but their tools.

3. A military police sergeant with two corporals and twelve mounted military policemen will be attached to each pioneer battalion, under the orders of the battalion commander.

4. The first battalion will be formed in Cherbourg; the second, in a place still to be designated, near Rochefort; the third, on the island of Oléron; the fourth, in a place still to be designated, on the Arles canal.

Vagrants, able-bodied and undomiciled beggars, and men kept in workhouses without serving court sentences will be taken to any one of

these four depots in order to be enrolled and incorporated into the battalions.

5. Their uniform will be an overcoat of coarse cloth, cut in the most practical way for workers.

6. A fund of fifty centimes per man will be allocated from the special funds of the minister of the interior. These fifty centimes will be retained out of the revenue produced by the labor of the pioneers, who will be made to work as much as possible.

[Letter to Cretet, 1807] Ideally, things should be so ordered as to make it possible to declare: Every beggar shall be arrested. But to arrest a beggar merely in order to put him in jail would be barbarous and absurd. He should be arrested for the sole purpose of teaching him how to earn a living by his work.

{139} [Letter, 1802] Among the innumerable questions that cause a division of opinion and interest between proletarians and property owners, the price of wheat is the one on which their interests are most sharply opposed. It also is, perhaps, the only matter in which the government must always favor the proletarians against the propertied class. Otherwise: tyranny on the part of the owners, revolt on the part of the people.

The winter of 1811-12 was one of scarcity and, for the lowest classes, starvation. In a note dictated during a council of ministers (March 11, 1812), Napoleon outlined a plan for organizing soup kitchens which would dispense an economic brew devised by that inventive Yankee, Count Rumford. However, the soup was not to be given away free in all places. Napoleon’s remarks on the subject are not without interest.

At Saint-Denis and in the environs of Paris, the prefect should have the

soup manufactured by contractors and publicly advertised. In Paris, too, the custom of selling it should be introduced, but quite independently of free distribution. As a matter of fact, a worker who earns a modest living might feel ashamed of asking for charity and yet find it very helpful, especially for his children, to be able to buy soup cheaply. It is more advantageous for the people to sell them the soup than to give it away free, for free distributions are necessarily limited, whereas in a region where wheat is scarce, this [i.e., selling cheap soup] may be done on a large scale.

{140} [Decision, 1807, on the right to work on Sundays and holidays] Since the people eats every day, it should be allowed to work every day.

[Conseil d'état, 1806] Everything in public worship must be free of charge for the people. The obligation to pay for admittance into churches, or for seats, is revolting. The poor must not be deprived, because they are poor, of that which reconciles them to their poverty.

[Conseil d'état, 1806] The Théâtre Français should reduce its orchestra seats to twenty sous on Sundays, so that the people may take advantage of it.

{141} [Letter to the minister of the interior, 1801] The subsidies granted to unwed mothers shall be suppressed as being contrary to morality. Those who are in need of support because of illness shall apply to the charity institutions.

[Letter to Cretet, 1808, on the necessity of reducing the expenses of the home for foundlings] Is it in the spirit of justice that a three-year-old foundling or the son of a beggar should cost the city four hundred francs, while a grant of four hundred francs could save a father, a mother, and three children from misery?...There are so many unfortunates that by giving in excess to some the others are robbed by that much.

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CHURCH, SCHOOL, AND PRESS

Serving the fatherland is a part of religion.

Of all political questions, [education] deserves perhaps the most attention.

My son, words are everything.

RELIGION IN STATE AND SOCIETY

{142} [Manuscript, 1786] It is axiomatic that Christianity, even the reformed kind, destroys the unity of the State: (1) because it is capable of weakening as well as of inspiring the trust which the people owe the representatives of the law; (2) because, such as it is constituted, Christianity contains a separate body which not only claims a share of the citizens' loyalty but is able even to counteract the aims of the government. And, besides, is it not true that that body [the clergy] is independent of the State? Surely this is so, since it is not subject to the same rules. Is it known for defending the fatherland, law, and freedom? No. Its kingdom is not of this world. Consequently, it is never civic-minded.

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The clergy's wealth is a natural corollary of its spirit of independence from the government, and therefore Christianity is as responsible for it as for the abuses and the wars to which it has given rise. I say, "independence from the government." That is clear—first of all, because Christianity, being independent in spiritual matters, necessarily had to influence temporal matters likewise.

The Gospels may say, "Obey your sovereign," as much as they like—what do these words mean to me? It is not words I am after but the spring of

action and the constitution [of the Church], and they say the opposite. Likewise, it is easy for them to say, “Stay poor and wise”—but the power that drives their institution says, “Be rich!” Yet even if its spirit were strictly observed, Christianity would break the unity of the State.

{143} [Letter to the bishop of Como, 1797] The morality of the Gospels is the morality of equality and, by that token, the morality best suited to the republican form of government.

[Letter to the archbishop of Genoa, 1797] Popular sovereignty and liberty constitute the political code of the Gospels.

[Letter to the Sheik El-Messiri, Cairo, 1798] I hope that the time is not far off when I shall be able to assemble all the wise and learned men of this country and establish a uniform government, based on the principles of the Koran, which alone are true and capable of bringing happiness to men.

[Conversation, at Malmaison, c. 1800] Last Sunday I was here, walking in the solitude and the silence of nature. Suddenly the sound of the church bell of Rueil struck my ears. I felt moved, so strong is the power of childhood habits and of upbringing. Then I told myself: “What an impression this must make on simple and credulous people! What can your philosophers and ideologists answer to that? The people need religion.”

[Conversation, 1800] How can there be any order in a State without religion? Society cannot exist without inequality of fortune, and inequality of fortune cannot exist without religion.

[Conseil d'état, 1806] In religion I do not see the mystery of the Incarnation but the mystery of the social order. Religion associates with Heaven an idea of equality which prevents the rich from being massacred by the poor.

[Conseil d'état, 1806] The disease to be feared in our times is not fanaticism but atheism.

{144} [Conversation, 1801] Do you know what the Concordat is that I just signed? It is a vaccine against religion. Fifty years from now there will be no more religion in France.

[Stenographic transcript, Conseil d'état, 1805] Religion is the vaccine of the imagination: it preserves it from all dangerous and absurd doctrines. It is enough for a Christian Brother to tell a man of the lower classes: “This life is but a transition.”

[Conseil d'état, 1806] Religion is a kind of inoculation or vaccine which, while satisfying our love of the supernatural, immunizes us against charlatans and witch doctors. Priests do less harm than a Cagliostro, a Kant, and all the dreamers of Germany.

THE POLITICAL USE OF RELIGION

{145} [Conversation, 1816] When I seized the helm, I already had settled ideas about all the principal elements that make for the cohesion of society. I had fully weighed the importance of religion. My mind was made up, and I resolved to restore the Church. But it is hard to believe how much resistance I had to overcome in order to bring Catholicism back. I would have found more willing support if I had hoisted the Protestant banner....There is no doubt that after the disorder to which I succeeded, in the ruins on which I found myself placed, I was free to choose between Catholicism and Protestantism. It is also true to say that the times entirely favored the latter. But, quite aside from the fact that my native religion really meant something to me, my decision was founded on reasons of the highest order. If I had proclaimed Protestantism, what would have been the result? I would have divided France into two parties of approximately equal

strength, whereas I wanted to have no more parties at all. I would have revived the fury of religious quarrels just when the spirit of the times and my own will aimed at making them vanish forever. In rending each other, these two parties would have annihilated France and made her the slave of Europe—when I had the ambition to make her Europe's mistress. With Catholicism, I was sure to succeed in all my great plans. At home, in France, the majority was sure to swallow up the minority, and I was resolved to treat the minority on a basis of equality such that soon there would have been no noticeable difference. Abroad, Catholicism was to keep the pope favorably disposed toward me—and what with my influence and my troops in Italy, I had reason to hope that sooner or later, one way or another, I would end up by controlling that pope. And after that—what influence! What a lever on public opinion throughout the world!

[Conversation, 1816, reported in English] My intention was to render everything pertaining to the State and to the constitution purely civil and independent of any religion. I wished to deprive the priests of all influence and power in civil affairs and to oblige them to confine themselves to their own spiritual matters and meddle with nothing else.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] It is an established fact, which the future will prove ever more clearly, that Napoleon loved his religion, that he wanted to encourage and honor it, but that at the same time he wanted to make use of it as a social means in order to repress anarchy, consolidate his domination over Europe, and enhance the prestige of France and the influence of Paris, which were the ends of all his thoughts. At that price he would have done everything for the Propaganda, the foreign missions, and the extension and increase of the power of the clergy.

{146} [Manuscript, 1786] If we are to believe the voice of prejudice,

nations are always in the wrong when they revolt against their sovereigns: “The divine law forbids it.” What has the divine law to do with purely human matters? Now, is it possible to imagine anything so absurd as an absolute prohibition imposed by the divine law against ever shaking off the yoke of a tyrant—even if he is a usurper? Thus an assassin clever enough to seize the throne after murdering the legitimate ruler would immediately be protected by the divine law, whereas, if he had failed, he would have been sentenced to have his criminal head cut off on the scaffold. Do not tell me he will be punished in the next world, for the same thing can be said of all common criminals as well.

[From the catechism approved by Napoleon for use in France] *Question:* What should one think of those who would fail in their duties toward our Emperor?

Answer: According to the Apostle Saint Paul, they would resist the order established by God Himself and would make themselves deserving of eternal damnation.

ON MONKS AND BEGGARS

{147} [Letter to Fouché, 1810] There is an article in the *Publiciste* which seems to be friendly to the Spanish monks. Make the editor realize the impropriety of such articles and that he is risking the suppression of his newspaper. Have articles written which portray the ferocity of those monks, their ignorance and their abysmal stupidity; for the monks of Spain are veritable butcher boys.

[Letter to Eugène Beauharnais, viceroy of Italy, 1810] Take the most efficacious measures in order to repress the hostile disposition shown everywhere by the monks. I do not intend to let myself be insulted by that vermin.

[Conversation, 1816] A strict distinction [must be maintained] between the poor, who command our respect, and beggars, who should excite our indignation. But our religious aberrations have so thoroughly confused these two classes that they seem to make a merit, a kind of virtue, out of begging. They encourage begging by promising heavenly rewards to its practitioners—in fact, beggars are neither more nor less than monks on a small scale—to such a point that in the religious vocabulary there are mendicant monks. How could ideas like that fail to bring confusion into people's minds and disorder into society? A large number of canonized saints have as their chief apparent merit the fact that they were beggars. They seem to have been promoted to Paradise for something that, on earth and in a well-policed society, should have earned them only a prison sentence—which, by the way, would not have prevented them from going to Heaven later.

CAESAR AND GOD

{148} [Letter to Cardinal Mattei, 1796] Any priest who mixes in politics is unworthy of the consideration due his office.

[Letter to the bishop of Malta, 1798] I know of no one worthier of the respect and veneration of men than a priest who, filled with the true spirit of the Gospels, is convinced that his duties command him to obey the temporal power and to maintain the peace, order, and harmony of a diocese.

[Letter to Eugène, viceroy of Italy, 1809] It is said that the bishop of Udine has behaved badly.{149} If this is true, have him shot. It is time that we make an example of these false priests.

The reason for Napoleon's sudden increase of severity toward the Church was the fact that in 1809 his struggle with the papacy had entered its climactic stage. In May, 1809, he annexed the Papal States. Pope Pius VII

promptly excommunicated him but was made a prisoner and eventually taken to Fontainebleau. Early in 1814 Pius signed, under pressure, a new concordat, which he repudiated as soon as Napoleon fell.

{150} [Letter to his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, 1806] As far as the pope is concerned, I am Charlemagne, for like Charlemagne I have united the crowns of France and Lombardy, and my Empire extends to the borders of the Orient.

[Letter to the same, 1806] I am Charlemagne, the sword of the Church and their [the clergy's] Emperor....I am informing the pope of my plans in a few words. If he does not acquiesce, I shall reduce him to the same status that he held before Charlemagne.

[Letter to Joachim (Murat), king of Naples, 1809] This instant I have received the news that the pope has excommunicated all of us. By this he has excommunicated himself. No more regard for him! He is a raving madman and must be locked up.

[Speech to a clerical deputation, 1810] If the pope wishes to be the Dalai Lama, I no longer am of his religion.

[Letter to Prince Borghese, 1811] Since nothing induces the pope to behave reasonably, he will see that I am powerful enough to do what my predecessors have done—to depose a pope.

[Letter, 1811] I know that I must render unto God that which is God's, but the pope is not God.

[Same letter] The present epoch takes us back to the age of Charlemagne. All the kingdoms, principalities, and duchies which after the breaking up of his empire set themselves up as republics have now been restored under our laws. The Church of my Empire is the Church of the

Occident and of nearly the universality of Christendom.

I am resolved to convoke a council of the Western Church, to which I shall summon the bishops of Italy and of Germany, in order to draw up, as has been suggested by many bishops, a general discipline. Thus the Church of my Empire shall be one in its discipline as well as in its creed.

{151} [Conversation, 1815, during the Hundred Days] I was blind. I always believed the pope to be a man of very weak character. When he began to resist me, I charged it to his weakness, which made him give in to the bad advice of his entourage. I wanted to isolate him. He continued to resist. I treated him harshly. I was wrong. I was blind. Do you know what made me see the light?...The Bourbons!...When I saw that the pope resisted the Bourbons in the affair of the bishops—"What's this?" [I said to myself.] "The pope resists the Bourbons just as he resisted me!" The scales fell from my eyes.

[Conversation, 1816] Pius VII is a real lamb, a wholly good man, a truly upright man whom I esteem, of whom I am very fond, and who, for his part, reciprocates my feeling to some extent I am sure.

[Conversation, 1817] Madmen always keep talking of God and of the sovereign.

ON ASSIMILATING THE JEWS

{152} [Conversation, 1817] Moses was a clever man, and the Jews are a vile people, cowardly and cruel.

Napoleon's deeply ingrained prejudice against the Jews was aggravated in 1806 by reports to the effect that entire districts in Alsace had been mortgaged to Jewish moneylenders. (Most of the Jews in France were then concentrated in Alsace.) Napoleon's first reaction was violent, as will be

seen. Yet the lawgiver conquered the bigot. Instead of following up his first impulse, Napoleon sought to solve the Jewish problem by a legislation which, though characteristically highhanded, aimed at complete assimilation of the Jews. Whatever the faults of his program, the following excerpts testify to the originality of his thought and illustrate the abyss that divides a Napoleon from a Hitler.

{153} [Conseil d'état, April 30, 1806] The French government cannot stand by indifferently while a contemptible and degraded nation which is capable of the lowest deeds assumes exclusive ownership of the two beautiful departments of old Alsace. The Jews must be regarded as a nation, not as a sect. They are a nation within the nation....

It is necessary to forestall by legal measures the arbitrary sanctions which otherwise may have to be applied against the Jews, or else they would risk being massacred one day by the Christian population of Alsace, as has frequently happened, and almost always through their own fault....

It would be dangerous to let the keys of France—Strasbourg and Alsace—fall into the hands of a nation of spies who have no attachment to the fatherland. Formerly, the Jews were not even allowed to spend the night in Strasbourg. Perhaps it would be advisable to enact a law which would set the number of Jews permitted to reside in the departments of Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin at fifty thousand. The excess of that population could spread itself through the rest of France at will.

One also might forbid them to practice commerce, on the ground that they dishonor it by taking usury, and void their past transactions as being tainted by fraud.

[Decree, May 30, 1806] These circumstances [i.e., the alleged conditions in Alsace] have also acquainted Us with the urgent need to revive, among

those of Our subjects who profess the Jewish religion, that sense of civic morality which unfortunately has been blunted in too many of them by the degraded status in which they have always been kept. To maintain or restore that status does not enter into Our intentions.

In order to accomplish this purpose, We have resolved to call an assembly of the foremost Jews and to communicate Our intentions to them through commissioners whom We shall nominate to that end. These commissioners will at the same time receive the Jews' proposals concerning the most expedient methods of reviving the exercise of useful arts and professions among their brethren, so that the shameful practices by which many of them have earned their livelihood through the generations may be replaced by honorable industriousness.

{154} [Note to the minister of the interior, August 23, 1806, on the assembly of the Jews] Not since the capture of Jerusalem by Titus have so many enlightened men belonging to the religion of Moses been able to assemble in one place. Dispersed and persecuted, the Jews have been subjected either to punitive taxation, or to enforced abjuration of their faith, or to other obligations and concessions equally opposed to their interests and religion. Present circumstances are in all respects unlike those prevailing in any earlier age. The Jews are not expected to abandon their religion or to submit to any change that would violate it either in the letter or in the spirit.

During the persecution of the Jews and during the periods when they went into hiding in order to escape persecution, various kinds of doctrines and customs came into existence. The rabbis took it upon themselves to interpret the principles of their faith whenever there was need for clarification. But the right to religious legislation cannot be exercised by

individuals; it must be exercised by a general congress of Jews legally and freely assembled, including members of the Spanish and Portuguese, Italian, German, and French communities and representing the Jews of more than three fourths of Europe.

Consequently, it appears that the first thing to be done is to constitute the assembly now meeting in Paris into a Great Sanhedrin whose acts will take their place alongside the Talmud as articles of faith and as principles of religious legislation.

When this has been accomplished, all Jews of whatever nation are to be invited to send representatives to Paris and to put their wisdom at the disposal of the deliberations of the Great Sanhedrin. Accordingly, all the synagogues of Europe are to be notified by some form of proclamation. This notification shall be officially addressed to the synagogues of France. The replies that will be made to the questions put before the Great Sanhedrin shall be converted into theological rulings or precepts in such a manner that they shall have the authority of ecclesiastic and religious law and shall constitute a second legislation of the Jews. This second legislation, while preserving the essential character of the Mosaic law, shall be adapted to the present situation of the Jews and to modern ways and customs.

The following questions have been submitted, to wit:

1. Are Jews permitted to marry several wives?—The answer must be clearly in the negative, and polygamy must be forbidden in Europe by the present assembly or by the Great Sanhedrin.

2 Is divorce allowed by the Jewish religion? Is a divorce valid without having been granted by the courts and on the strength of laws which conflict with those of the French nation?—The assembly in its capacity of

Great Sanhedrin must forbid divorce except in such cases as are provided for by the civil law or the Code Napoléon and are granted by the civil authority.

3 Is a Jewess allowed to marry a Christian, or a Christian woman a Jew? Or does the law demand that Jews marry only among themselves?—The Great Sanhedrin will have to declare that no religious marriage can take place until after a couple has been pronounced married by the civil authority and that Jews and Jewesses are free to marry Frenchmen or Frenchwomen. It even is necessary that the Great Sanhedrin recommend such mixed unions as a means of protecting and benefiting the Jewish people.

4. Do the Jews regard Frenchmen as their brethren or as aliens?—Acknowledging, as the assembly has done, that Frenchmen and Jews are brothers, the Sanhedrin shall lay down this principle: that the Jews are the brothers of all the inhabitants of those countries where they are afforded not merely toleration but also protection and where they are admitted to the exercise of all the privileges attached to political and civil existence. In this respect, the Sanhedrin shall stress the difference between French and Italian legislation and the legislation in other countries.

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6. Do the Jews who were born in France and whom French law treats as French citizens regard France as their fatherland? Are they obliged by their laws to defend France, to obey her laws, and to conform to all the provisions of the Civil Code?—The Sanhedrin must declare that the Jews are obliged to defend France as they would defend Jerusalem, since they are treated in France as they would be in the Holy City....

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11. Are Jews forbidden by their law to make usurious loans to their

coreligionists?

12. Does their law forbid them or permit them to make usurious loans to aliens?—The Sanhedrin shall forbid usury toward Frenchmen and toward the inhabitants of any country where the Jews enjoy full civil rights. It shall put this interpretation upon the Mosaic law by stating that the Jews must regard all places where they are citizens as they would regard Jerusalem; that they are strangers only in those places where the law of the land subjects them to persecution and vexatious treatment; and that it is only in the last-named countries that their religious law may tolerate illicit gains. Once this point has been settled by the Sanhedrin, an attempt should be made to study the question whether efficacious methods can be found to restrain and repress their habitual propensity to shady deals, their organized system of usury and fraud.

All this is intended merely to serve as a directive to the commissioners. They will understand what is wanted of them, and they will start out by finding the means of accomplishing it. They will confer particularly with the most influential members of the assembly. They will declare that I am pleased by the zeal that animates its members. They will impress on them that these are extraordinary circumstances and that I wish to make certain by all available means that the rights which have been restored to the Jewish people shall not prove illusory, so that they may find Jerusalem in France.

[Letter to the minister of the interior, Poznan, November 29, 1806] Out of every three marriages in each of the administrative districts of the Sanhedrin or consistory, no more than two marriages between Jews and Jewesses are to be authorized; the third must be a mixed marriage between Jew and Christian. If this provision seems too difficult to carry out, it will

be necessary to take steps which will lead to that end by way of exhortation, education, incentives, and command.

[In the same letter, Napoleon comments as follows on this provision] When out of every three marriages one marriage is a mixed French-Jewish union, the Jewish blood will cease to have any distinctive characteristic.

WHAT THE SCHOOLS SHOULD TEACH

{155} [Conversation, early 1800s] What is it that distinguishes people from one another? Education, isn't it?

{156} [Manuscript, 1791] Should the common people be taught mathematics, then? Why not? Is this notion so absurd? Do you not make them learn their catechism? Now if for the catechism you substituted a course of elementary geometry, would that be impracticable or less useful?

[Letter to the governor of the École Polytechnique, 1805] It is dangerous to give too extensive a knowledge of mathematics to people who are not rich.

{157} [Annual report on the state of the Republic, 1801] The government has given thought to a more concentrated system of public education. The primary schools serving one or several communes...will offer everywhere to the children of the citizens those elementary facts of knowledge without which man is merely a blind agent, dependent on everything around him.

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The secondary schools will teach the elements of the ancient languages, of geography, of history, and of mathematics.

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Thirty schools, called *lycées*, will be established and kept up at the

expense of the Republic in the principal cities....They will teach the learned languages, geography, history, logic, and those modern languages which the location of the city makes most appropriate.

The school system such as Napoleon eventually established it more or less followed the foregoing outline. Its characteristic features were (1) the neglect of primary and secondary education, which was left to the communes, and (2) the centralization of the *lycées* (corresponding to the high schools in the United States) under the government. Lastly, the State was given exclusive monopoly over all education. The system was a disappointment to those who had hoped for a more generous educational policy toward the lower classes. However, the following ideas on the role of high schools may be read with profit in our own days.

[Letter to the minister of the interior, 1807] A young man of sixteen, upon leaving his *lycée,* is thus acquainted with the mechanism of his language, with the classic authors, with the parts of speech and the various figures of rhetoric, with the devices by which eloquence can calm or excite the passions—in one word, with everything that is taught in a course on belles-lettres. He is familiar with the principal epochs of history and with the main geographic divisions. He has learned to compute and to measure. He has general notions of the most striking natural phenomena and of the principles of statics and dynamics as applied to solids and liquids.

Whether he wants to enter a legal, military, ecclesiastic, or literary career; whether he intends to become a scientist, geographer, engineer, or surveyor—in each case he has received the common educational basis which is necessary to prepare him for the additional education required by these professions. And when he has reached a decision on the choice of his profession, the specialized studies are open to him.

[Conseil d'état, 1806] As for university degrees, the doctor’s degree should not be awarded too readily....There is no reason why everybody should be able to become a doctor.

EDUCATION AS INDOCTRINATION

{158} [Letter to the rector of the University of Bologna, 1805] Avoid everything that might give false ideas of the truth.

[Note on the *lycées*, 1805] Perhaps the time will soon come when we must deal with the question whether teachers should be organized as a corps. Should this corps or order be a religious association, take vows of chastity, renounce the world, etc.? There seems to be no connection between these ideas.

In its present state, the teaching personnel consists of principals, proctors, and professors. A teachers’ corps would come into existence if all the principals, proctors, and professors of the Empire were subordinate to one or several head officials, just as the Jesuits were subordinate to a general, to provincials, etc.; if in order to be principal or proctor it would be necessary to have been a professor first; if in order to teach in the upper grades professors first would have to teach in the lower ones; and, finally, if there existed in the teaching career a progressive system of promotion that would stimulate competition, so that at every stage in his life a teacher had something to hope for and aim at. A man who has devoted his life to teaching ought not to marry before having passed through several stages of his career. For him as for anyone else, marriage ought to be a goal that is always before his eyes but that he can reach only after he has secured his place in society and his financial independence by obtaining a position sufficiently remunerative to enable him to live as the head of a family without abandoning his chosen career. Thus the teaching career would be

subject to the same conditions as the other civil service careers.

This corps would have its own *esprit.* The Emperor would extend his protection to its most distinguished members and through his favors raise them to a higher position in public esteem than that of the priests in the times when their orders were regarded as a kind of patent of nobility. Everybody used to be aware of the importance of the Jesuits; the importance of the teachers' corporation would be quickly realized if the public saw a talented man, after receiving his education at a *lycée,* called to teach in his turn, advance from grade to grade, and take his place in the first ranks of the State before completing his career.

Of all political questions, this one deserves perhaps the most attention. There will be no political stability so long as there is no teaching body based on stable principles. So long as children are not taught whether they must be republicans or monarchists, Catholics or freethinkers, etc., the State will not constitute a nation but rest on vague and shifting foundations, ever exposed to disorder and change.

[Speech on the university, 1810] The lowest ranking professors in our *lycées* are important magistrates. They are not boarding-school keepers, major-domos, or hired servants: they walk with their heads high, side by side with the parents, whose equals they are. They do not assume the countenance of salaried personnel when facing the parents; they do not subordinate their principles to fads and fashions; they are not obliged to give in to vexatious and puerile demands: they are in a position to do all the good which they have been called upon to achieve.

Lastly, I want to put into practice, in a country of forty million people, what Sparta and Athens did and what the religious orders attempted to do in modern times—with incomplete success, since they worked separately: I

want a corps that is sheltered from the petty excitements of fashion, a corps which keeps marching on even when the government dozes, a corps whose administration and regulations are to become so intimately linked with the interests of the whole people that no one could ever dare to undo it.

If my hopes become reality, I want this corps to stand as a guarantee against any of the pernicious theories that would subvert the social order in one direction or another. In every well-organized State there always has been a body whose responsibility it was to set the rules and principles of morality and politics. Such was the University of Paris and later the Sorbonne; such are, in Italy, the universities of Pavia, Pisa, and Padua; in Germany, those of Göttingen and Jena; in Spain, the University of Salamanca; in England, that of Oxford; in Turkey, the college of Ulemas. These bodies, being foremost in the defense of the cause of morality and the principles of the State, are the first to sound the alarm and are always prepared to resist the dangerous theories of those who are constantly intent on being unlike other men and who, at recurring intervals, renew those futile arguments which everywhere and all too frequently have inflamed public opinion.

THE POWER AND GUIDANCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

{159} [Letter to Lucien, 1788, on a patriotic proclamation which Lucien had drafted] I have read your proclamation. It is utterly worthless. There are too many words and not enough ideas. You indulge in rhetoric. This is not the proper way to speak to the people: the people has more judgment than you give it credit for. Your fine prose will do more harm than good.

[Conversation, 1815] Public opinion is an invisible power, mysterious and irresistible. Nothing is more mobile, nothing vaguer, nothing stronger. No matter how capricious, it nonetheless is truthful, reasonable, and just, far

more often than one would think.

{160} [Stenographic transcript, Conseil d'état, 1804] We are here to guide public opinion, not to discuss it.

[Letter to Fouché, 1804] Barère{161} still believes that the masses must be stirred. On the contrary, they must be guided without their noticing it.

[Letter to Murat, 1806] The opinion of the population signifies nothing.

[Conversation, 1817, reported in English] I always went along with the opinion of the masses and with events. I always paid little attention to individual opinions and a great deal to public opinion.

{162} [Conseil d'état, 1801] What do I care for the opinion of drawing-room gossips? I don’t listen to them. For me, only one opinion counts—that of the rich peasants. All the rest is nothing.

[Letter to Murat, 1806] I find it ridiculous that you answer me by citing the opinion of the people of Westphalia. What has the opinion of peasants to do with political questions?

{163} [Instructions, 1801, to his personal librarian, Ripault] Every day, Citizen Ripault will obtain copies of all the newspapers except the eleven political papers. He will read them carefully and will analyze whatever they contain that might influence public opinion, especially as regards religion, philosophy, and political ideas. He will submit this analytical summary to me daily between five and six o'clock.

Every ten days, he will submit to me the analysis of the brochures or books published within the last ten days and designate those passages which might affect public morality or which might interest me from the political and moral point of view.

He will take care to secure [copies of] all the plays that are performed and to analyze them for me, adding observations of the same nature as above. This analysis must be completed, at the latest, forty-eight hours after a play has been performed.

Every first and sixth day [of the *décade* or ten-day week in the revolutionary calendar], between five and six o'clock, he will submit to me a bulletin on the posters, placards, or advertisements that may be worthy of attention; he will also report on whatever has come to his knowledge and has been done or said in the various *lycées*, literary assemblies, sermons, newly established schools, or sensational court hearings that might be of interest from the point of view of politics or morals.

{164} [Conversation, 1816] Absolute power has no need to lie: it is silent. Responsible government, on the other hand, being obliged to speak, dissimulates and lies shamelessly.

{165} [Letter to Talleyrand, 1800] The First Consul has merely glanced through the “Letters of an Envoy to the German Diet,” but he sees no objection to their being printed as a brochure. Care should be taken to use paper manufactured in Germany and German type faces. The letters could be dated from Frankfurt.

I also would like you to have caricatures made which would show the [Austrian] minister Thugut between the doge of Venice and a director of the Cisalpine Republic. The allusion should be to the fact that Thugut despoils the one on the strength of the Treaty of Campo Formio and jails the other because he [Thugut] no longer recognizes the Treaty of Campo Formio.

[Letter to Cambacérès, 1806] Have Turkish and Arabic translations made of all the bulletins of the Grand Army issued during this and the last campaign, and have large quantities of them sent to Constantinople. Have

six thousand copies printed. Get someone to write a small, well-made brochure of ten pages, which you will edit yourself and which you will entitle “An Old Ottoman to His Brothers.” This will be a call to arms against the Russians, an account of their policy and of the results they want to obtain through it. You will have ten thousand copies of it printed in those same languages.

[Letter to Fouché, 1806] The Turks have entered Walachia at the same time as the Russians entered Moldavia. Have some articles written to that effect and date-line them from Bucharest. The facts are true, but it is nevertheless necessary to enlighten public opinion. Also, have some articles made on Persia and date them from Tiflis.{166}

{167} [Letter to Joseph, February 27, 1814] I have received engravings of the king of Rome. I want you to have their legend changed from “May God protect my father and France” to “I pray God for my father and for France.” This is simpler. I also want you to have engravings made on which the king is dressed in the uniform of the National Guard. [N.B.: The king of Rome was three years old.]

[Letter to Savary, February 27, 1814] Instead of all the stupidities with which the daily press is filled, why do you not send commissioners to visit the districts from which we have expelled the enemy and make them collect the details of the crimes that have been committed there? Nothing more powerful could be found to stir the minds than a recital of the details. What we need at this moment is real and serious things, not wit in prose and verse. My hair stands on end when I hear of the crimes committed by the enemy, and the police have not even thought of obtaining a single account of these happenings. To say the truth, I have never been worse served! There are respectable inhabitants in those communes whose word would be

credited. Judges of the peace, mayors, parish priests, canons, bishops, officials, and former nobles could put in writing what they have told us. This is the kind of thing that must be printed.

Now, these people will not write anything if they are not asked. For that purpose, neither wit nor literary abilities are required. Sixty-year-old women and young girls of twelve have been raped by groups of thirty to forty soldiers. The enemy have looted, robbed, vandalized, and set fire everywhere. They have burned down the town halls in the communes. The Russian soldiers and officers have declared, wherever they passed, that they wanted to march on Paris and to burn down the city after carrying away whatever they could find. A picture drawn in large strokes will not convince the people. With ink and paper you can draw any pictures you like. Only by telling the facts simply and with details can we convince them.

NAPOLEON AS EDITORIAL WRITER

A frustrated newspaperman, Napoleon was the author of innumerable editorials, notices, book and art reviews, and other unsigned items which appeared in the official and semi-official press, such as the *Moniteur Universel* and the *Journal de l'Empire.* He carried on a particularly spirited feud with the English press, which infuriated him beyond all reason. Among the educated class, Napoleon's efforts—for his authorship was transparent—created amusement rather than the desired effect. Since memoirs and history are written by the educated class, the view has come to prevail that Napoleon's journalism did him more harm than good. This may be so, but it is difficult to assess the impact of his prose on the mass of the readers. The typical diatribe from which the following excerpt is taken was published in the *Moniteur* in May, 1803, in answer to the message of King George III to Parliament on the renewal of warfare between France and England.

{168} If France had had ambitious projects and ideas of aggrandizement, would she not have kept all of Italy under her direct influence? Would she not have annexed the Batavian Republic, Switzerland, and Portugal? Instead of making these easy acquisitions, she wisely offers to limit her territory and her power, and she accepts the loss of the huge territory of Santo Domingo as well as of the large sums of money and the armies that have been sent to recover that colony. She makes every sacrifice so that peace may continue.

England, on the contrary, seizes the whole of the wealthy island of Ceylon and all shipping in the Gulf of Bengal. She acquires the important colony of Trinidad. She tries to invade Egypt by means of a secret treaty with the Mamelukes and by sending them arms and ammunition. She evacuates Alexandria only long after the term agreed upon has expired, and then merely because she is afraid of a plague epidemic. She violates the Treaty of Amiens [of 1802] in order to keep Malta, to displace the Barbary Pirates, to gain a trade monopoly in the Adriatic, the Levant, the Dardanelles, and the Black Sea, and to close the Mediterranean to the ships of all nations. She does everything in her power to make France lose Santo Domingo and to prevent her from making use of Louisiana. She stirs up dissension among the Swiss cantons and supplies munitions and arms to feed their civil war. She sends fleets to the northern seas, off Texel and the [mouth of the] Meuse, threatening to invade Holland. She covets Sicily, asks for the island of Lampedusa, and occupies Sardinia. The four quarters of the world, all the gulfs, capes, straits, and rich colonies are not enough to satisfy her political and commercial cupidity.

At last her greed and her ambitions are out in the open. The mask is down: England allows but thirty-six more hours to the duration of the peace. She has speculated on sudden war so that she may seize at one fell

swoop, on all the high seas, all the riches that had long been stored in warehouses and that the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch colonies were able at long last to send to their mother countries, as well as the warships of the French Republic and the commercial vessels which had barely begun to revive our trade. For the sake of indulging her malignant and all too powerful passions, England disturbs the peace of the world, wantonly violates the rights of nations, tramples underfoot the most solemn treaties, and breaks her pledged faith—that ancient, eternal faith which even savage hordes acknowledge and respect religiously.

One sole obstacle stands in the way of her policies and her ambitious course—victorious, moderate, prosperous France; her vigorous and enlightened government; her illustrious and magnanimous leader. These are the targets of England's delirious envy, of her repeated assaults, of her implacable hatred, of her diplomatic intrigues, of her maritime conspiracies, and of the official denunciations to her Parliament and subjects. But Europe watches; France arms; History writes; Rome destroyed Carthage!

NAPOLEON AS WAR CORRESPONDENT

Napoleon dictated all important army bulletins himself. These, too, were published in the press. Their purpose was multiple: to inform the public, to counter rumors, to mislead the enemy, and to stir up enthusiasm and hatred. "To lie like a bulletin" was a proverbial expression in Napoleon's army. Serving as his own minister of propaganda, Napoleon may be credited with having transformed this ancient weapon into an organized feature of modern government. Of the many hundreds of bulletins, only a few representative excerpts can be given here.

{169} [Warsaw, January 22, 1807] Now that the English can no longer make the world believe that the Russians, the Tartars, and the Kalmuks are

about to swallow up the French army—for even in the London coffeehouses they are realizing that these worthy allies of theirs cannot withstand the sight of our bayonets—now they make appeals to dysentery, bubonic plague, and every sort of epidemic disease. If these scourges were at the disposal of the London cabinet, there is no doubt that not only our army but even our provinces and the entire working class of the Continent would become their victims.

[General Headquarters, near Madrid, December 5, 1808] “Arms, gunpowder, uniforms, all this the English have given us,” said a [captured] Spanish officer, “but their soldiers came only to stir us up, to lead us astray, and to abandon us in the middle of the crisis.”—”But,” replied a French officer, “are you ignorant of the most recent facts in our history? What have the English done for the stadholder [of the Netherlands], for the king of Sardinia, for Austria? What have they done for Russia in the recent war? And, still more recently, for Sweden? Everywhere they foment war. They distribute arms like poison, but they never shed their blood except for their immediate personal interests. You must not expect anything else from their selfishness.”

{170} [Austerlitz, December 3, 1805] On December 1 the Emperor, from the height of his bivouac, observed with indescribable joy that the Russian army, almost within artillery range from his outposts, was beginning a flanking movement intended to turn his right. He could see then to what extent presumptuousness and ignorance of the art of war had misled the councils of that brave army. He said several times, “Before tomorrow night this army will be mine.” Meanwhile, the enemy displayed quite a different mood. They exposed themselves at pistol range from our main guard. They strung themselves out over a line four leagues long in a flanking march alongside the French army, which appeared to be afraid of leaving its

positions. The enemy's only fear was that the French army might elude them. Everything was done to confirm them in that notion. Prince Murat ordered a small body of cavalry to advance into the plain, but suddenly, as if astonished at seeing the enemy's huge forces, it hastily retreated. Thus everything tended to confirm the Russian commander in the ill-calculated plan he had decided upon....

At nightfall, the Emperor wished to visit all the bivouacs, on foot and incognito, but no sooner had he walked a few steps than he was recognized. It would be impossible to describe the soldiers' enthusiasm when they saw him. Instantly, straw torches were tied to thousands of poles, and eighty thousand men turned to the Emperor, greeting him with cheers—some in order to celebrate the anniversary of his coronation [December 2, 1804], some shouting that the army would present its bouquet to him on the morrow. One of the oldest grenadiers stepped up to him and said, "Sire, you won't have to take any chances with your person. I promise you in the name of the grenadiers of the army that you won't have to fight with anything except your eyes and that we'll bring you the flags and the guns of the Russian army to celebrate the anniversary of your coronation tomorrow."

Returning to his bivouac, which consisted of a ramshackle and roofless hut built for him out of straw by the grenadiers, the Emperor said: "This is the finest evening of my life. But I am sorry at the thought that I shall lose a good many of those brave people. By the sadness this causes me I can feel that they are indeed my children—and, to tell the truth, I sometimes blame myself for this feeling, for I fear that it will end up by spoiling me for war."...

On December 2, dawn came at last. The sun rose radiant, and that anniversary of the Emperor's coronation, on which one of the most glorious

feats of the century was to take place, was one of the finest autumn days.

This battle, which the soldiers persist in calling the Three Emperors' Battle, which others call the Battle of the Anniversary, and which the Emperor has named the Battle of Austerlitz, will be forever memorable in the annals of our great nation.

Passing in front of several regiments in battle array, the Emperor said, "Soldiers! We must end this battle with a thunderclap that will confound the arrogance of our enemies"; and instantly their hats waving at the ends of their bayonets and shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* gave the actual signal for the battle to begin. A second later, gunfire could be heard from the extreme right, which had already been by-passed by the enemy vanguard. But their unforeseen encounter with Marshal Davout stopped the enemy short, and the fighting began.

Marshal Soult began to move at the same instant, making for the heights of the village of Pratzen with the divisions of generals Vandamme and Saint-Hilaire, and completely cut off the enemy's right, whose actions became altogether uncertain. Surprised in their movement by a flanking march, finding themselves attacked when they had thought that they were the attackers, they looked upon themselves as half defeated.

Prince Murat passed to the attack with his cavalry. The left, under the command of Marshal Lannes, marched in echelons, regiment by regiment, as on the parade ground. A terrible artillery duel began along the whole line. The noise of two hundred guns and nearly two hundred thousand men was terrifying. It was a true battle of giants. The fighting had lasted less than an hour when the entire enemy left had been cut off. Their right had already reached Austerlitz, where the emperors of Russia and of Austria had their headquarters. The emperors were obliged to throw the Russian imperial

guards into the battle without delay in an attempt to restore communications between the center and the left. The cavalry of the Russian imperial guards charged and overran a battalion of our fourth regiment of the line; but the Emperor was not far; he noticed their maneuver, he ordered Marshal Bessières to come to the aid of the right with his invincibles, and soon the two guards were locked in combat.

The issue could not be in doubt: after a short time the Russian guard was routed. Their colonel, their artillery, their standards, everything was captured. The regiment of Grand Duke Constantine was crushed; he himself owed his escape only to the speed of his horse.

From the heights of Austerlitz, the two emperors were watching the defeat of the Russian guards. At the same time the center of our army, commanded by Marshal Bernadotte, began to advance. Three of its regiments supported a very gallant cavalry charge. The left, under Marshal Lannes, charged three times. All the charges were victorious. The division of General Caffarelli distinguished itself. The cuirassier divisions captured the enemy batteries.

At one o'clock in the afternoon the victory was decided. It had never been in doubt for a moment. Not a single soldier of the reserve had been needed, and none had been used. The cannonade continued only on our right. The enemy corps which had been surrounded and dislodged from all the heights was now in a depression, with its back against a lake. The Emperor attacked it with twenty artillery pieces. This corps was hunted from position to position, and a horrible spectacle could be seen...: twenty thousand men throwing themselves into the water and drowning in the lake! {171}...

Never did a battlefield look more horrible. From the middle of the

immense lake, the screams of thousands of men could be heard, but there was no way of coming to their aid. It will take three days before all the enemy wounded can be evacuated to Brünn; one's heart bleeds. May all this bloodshed, may all these miseries be avenged at last on the perfidious islanders who are responsible. May the cowardly oligarchs in London be visited with punishment for so much suffering!

Seven years later to the day, December 3, 1812, Napoleon at Molodechno dictated the famous 29th Bulletin, on the retreat of the *Grande Armée* from Moscow. The larger portion of the Bulletin is given below.

{172} The frost, which had begun on November 7, suddenly became more intense, and from November 14 to 15 and 16, the thermometer sank to 16°C. and 18°C. below freezing [2.2° and -0.4°F.]. The roads were covered with ice. The horses of the cavalry, artillery, and supply service died every night, not by the hundreds, but by the thousands, especially those coming from France and Germany. More than thirty thousand horses perished within a few days. Our whole cavalry found itself on foot; our artillery and transports were paralyzed. It was necessary to abandon and destroy a large part of our guns, our ammunition, and our victuals.

This army, so splendid on the 6th, was quite changed by the 14th, with almost no cavalry, no artillery, no supplies. Without cavalry, we were unable to send scouts farther than a quarter mile—and yet, without artillery, we could not risk a battle and wait passively to be attacked. We were obliged to march so as to avoid a battle, which our lack of ammunition made undesirable; we had to occupy a certain amount of space so as not to be turned, and that without any cavalry troops for reconnoitering and for keeping the columns in touch with one another. This difficulty, added to the sudden frost, put us into a serious situation. Those men whom nature had

not tempered and hardened against all accidents of fate and fortune seemed shaken; they lost their laughter and good humor and saw nothing ahead but disasters and catastrophes. Those whom she had created superior to everything kept up their good spirits, their ordinary manners, and regarded the various ordeals that lay ahead of them as challenges to yet another glorious deed.

The enemy, seeing the roads littered with the traces of this horrible calamity that had struck the French, sought to profit from it. He surrounded all our columns with his Cossacks, who, like the Arabs of the desert, made off with all the wagons and carriages that strayed from the road. This contemptible cavalry, which makes a great deal of noise but is incapable of breaking through a company of light infantry, became redoubtable because of the circumstances. However, the enemy had cause to regret whatever serious attempts he chose to make: he was thrown back by the viceroy [Eugène Beauharnais], whom he had sought to stop, and had many casualties in the fighting....

Meanwhile the enemy had occupied all the possible crossings of the Berezina. This river is about two hundred and fifty feet wide. It was carrying ice floes in considerable quantity, and along its shores there are swamps stretching for two thousand feet, which make it a difficult obstacle to cross.

The enemy commander [Kutuzov] had placed his four divisions at the various passages where he supposed the French army would wish to cross.

At dawn on November 26 the Emperor, after deceiving the enemy by various maneuvers on the 25th, made for the village of Studenka and immediately ordered two bridges to be thrown across the river. This was done in his presence and in the face of an enemy division. The duke of

Reggio crossed the river, attacked the enemy, and battled him for two hours. The enemy withdrew to the bridgehead at Borisov. General Legrand, an officer of the highest merit, was seriously but not dangerously wounded. All through November 26 and 27, the army passed....

There follows a description of the military miracles performed during the passage, but on the nightmarish sufferings Napoleon keeps silence. The bulletin—which preceded the Emperor to Paris by only one day—concludes as follows.

Our cavalry had lost so many horses that it became necessary to make a single unit of all the officers who still had their mounts and to organize them into four companies of one hundred fifty men each. The generals served as captains, the colonels as non-commissioned officers. This sacred squadron, commanded by General Grouchy under the orders of the king of Naples [Murat], did not lose sight of the Emperor wherever he went.

His Majesty's health has never been better.{173}

THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

{174} [Letter to Fouché, April 22, 1805] I want you to write to the editors of the *Journal des Débats,* the *Publiciste,* and the *Gazette de France*—these, I think, are the newspapers that are most widely read—in order to declare to them that...the revolutionary times are over and that there is but one single party in France; that I shall never tolerate the newspapers to say or do anything against my interests; that they may publish a few little articles with just a little poison in them, but that one fine morning somebody will shut their mouths.

[To the same, April 24, 1805] Tell these editors that I shall hold them responsible not for their criticism but for their failure to praise.

[Letter, 1806] Monsieur Talleyrand, it is my intention that the political articles in the *Moniteur* be written at the ministry of foreign affairs. Then, when I have observed for a month how well they are done, I shall forbid the other papers to talk politics except by copying the articles in the *Moniteur.*

[Letter to the minister of war, 1809] All the news must be made known in the *Moniteur,* but at the same time care should be taken to leave out everything that it is useless to know.

{175} [Letter to Fouché, 1808] I want you to put into the newspapers of Holland, Germany, and even Paris—but by indirect channels and under varying date lines—some articles that will warn of a coming expedition against Sicily. For instance, in one of them it might be said that there are only four regiments in Sicily—Englishmen, or émigrés, or mercenaries in English pay—adding up to four thousand men in all. In another article, it could be said that the first news of preparations [for a landing] has caused alarm in Sicily, that bronze cannons have been placed aboard the ships, and that the [Sicilian] court has packed all its valuables. In yet another, that King Joachim [Murat, of Naples] is going to Reggio. In another, that two French divisions, each nine thousand strong, are being assembled in Calabria. Finally, when these items have circulated for a week, announce in the Dutch newspapers that King Joachim has landed in Sicily with thirty thousand Frenchmen, Italians, and Neapolitans. To give some detail, you might say that he landed at the Punta del Faro, that General Regnier commands one of the divisions, General Parthonneaux another, General Lamarque a third. Have it repeated in other papers, under different date lines, that before his departure the king left the regency to the queen. In a word, use every means to focus public attention on the Sicilian expedition, so that it will be believed in London and cause alarm. This must be cleverly handled. It must be the result of information coming from every side and

the work of a dozen or so well-timed articles in the several papers.

{176} [Letter to Joseph, 1814] Newspapers are not history any more than bulletins are history.

[Conversation, 1816, reported by Las Cases] The Emperor had just read through a great many old numbers of the *Moniteur.* “These *Moniteurs,”* he said, “which are so devastating to so many reputations, are invariably useful and favorable to me alone. Really talented and careful historians will write history with official documents. Now, these documents are full of me; it is their testimony that I solicit and invoke.” He added that he had made the *Moniteur* into the soul and chief strength of his government, his intermediary and his line of communications with public opinion at home and abroad. All governments had more or less imitated him since.

{177} [Reminiscence of Bourrienne, early 1800s] While he [Napoleon] was being shaved, I used to read the newspapers to him, always beginning with the *Moniteur.* “Skip it, skip it,” he used to say when I read the French papers, “I know what’s in them. They say only what I tell them to.”

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SCIENCE AND THE ARTS

The true conquests, the only ones that leave no regret, are those that have been won from ignorance.

Without talent, without knowledge, there is no equality but the equality of misery and servitude.

“NEW TRUTHS, NEW DISCOVERIES”

{178} [Letter to the Directory, 1797] The sciences, which have revealed so many secrets and destroyed so many prejudices, are destined to render us yet greater service. New truths, new discoveries will unveil secrets still more essential to the happiness of men—but only if we give our esteem to the scientists and our protection to the sciences.

[Letter to Chaptal, 1802] I desire to award, as an encouragement, the sum of six thousand francs to the person who through his experiments and discoveries will advance our knowledge of electricity and galvanism by as great a stride as Franklin and Volta did....It is my specific aim to encourage physicists to concentrate their attention on that particular branch of physics, which in my opinion is the road to the great discoveries.

[Letter to Count Rumford, 1803] It is by means of numerous experiments, conducted with precision and aimed at reaching the truth, along with the kind of talent you are applying to your experiments, that progress is made little by little and that theories are formulated which are both simple and useful to all walks of life.

[Letter to the minister of the interior, 1807] Monsieur Champagny, for

the past twenty years a disease has been prevalent which is called the croup; it kills many children in the north of Europe. It has spread into France in the last few years. We desire you to offer a prize of twelve thousand francs, to be awarded to the physician who presents the best paper on that disease and the method of its treatment. [N.B.: Napoleon's young nephew had just died of the croup. Instead of mourning him—see No. 37—the Emperor took this more positive step.]

{179} [Decision, November 10, 1800] *The minister of war reports on the disposal of certain objects used at the school for aerostatics at Meudon.*

[Endorsement] Forwarded to the minister of the interior, who will have a report made...to determine if the establishment at Meudon can still be of some use to science. Bonaparte.

[Decision, October 28, 1808] *General Clarke, minister of war, submits to the Emperor the project of one l'Homond, former commander of an aerostat battalion, who proposes to effect an airborne landing in England by means of one hundred Montgolfier balloons of one hundred meters in diameter; each gondola could carry a thousand men, two weeks' rations, two artillery pieces with caissons, twenty-five horses, and the wood required to fuel the balloons.*

[Napoleon's endorsement] Forwarded to M. Monge to find out if it is worthwhile to try a large-scale experiment.

{180} [Conversation, 1817] Mankind is young and the earth is old. The human race has existed for six to seven thousand years at most, and thousands of years from now man will be quite different from what he is at present. Sciences will be so advanced then that perhaps a way will have been found to prolong life indefinitely. Chemistry as applied to plants and agriculture is still in its infancy. Not many centuries ago, we discovered

certain extraordinary properties of bodies which our present knowledge cannot explain—magnetism, electricity, galvanism. How many discoveries will have been made thousands of years from now!

{181} [Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] The Emperor dwelt on the topic of "political statistics." He highly praised the progress and usefulness of that new science. It is eminently suited, he said, to pointing out the road to truth, and it gives us a solid basis for forming judgments and making decisions. He called it "the budget of things." And, he added gaily, "outside a budget there is no salvation."

ON PHYSICIANS AND MEDICINE

{182} [Conversation, 1817] Corvisart [Napoleon's personal physician] had many doubts and did not always answer my questions. Horeau was sure of everything and explained everything. The one was a learned physician, the other an ignoramus.

[Conversation, 1817, reported in English] In my opinion, physicians kill as many people as we generals. When they dispatch a number of souls to the other world through ignorance, mistake, or not having properly examined their complaints, they are just as cool and insouciant as a general of my acquaintance, who lost three thousand men in storming a hill. Having succeeded, after several desperate attempts, he observed, with great sangfroid, "Oh! It wasn't this hill I meant to take, it was another. This one's of no use"—and returned to his former position.

[Conversations with Dr. Antommarchi, October-December, 1820] You are a physician, doctor. You would promise life to a corpse if he could swallow pills....You humor pain, and death ends it....I do not want two diseases—one nature-made, one doctor-made.

The pedantic brutality with which the ebullient Antommarchi tortured Napoleon in his agony—feeding emetics to a man in the last stages of stomach cancer—would seem to justify Napoleon's low opinion of most doctors. However, it should be recalled that he looked on Larrey, his surgeon general, with something akin to veneration, and that in his last will he called him "the most virtuous man I have ever known."

{183} [Letter to Desaix, Cairo, 1799] You ought to wear a flannel waistcoat: it is the best method of protecting yourself from the eye disease [trachoma].

[Letter to Princess Augusta, vice-reine of Italy, 1806] Try not to give us a daughter. I shall give you the prescription for that, but you will not believe me: drink a little undiluted wine every day.

[To Jérôme, 1807] My brother, I am informed that you have hemorrhoids. The simplest way to get rid of them is to have three or four leeches applied to you. Ever since I used this remedy, ten years ago, I have not suffered from them.

[From Dr. O'Meara's diary] June 7, 1816—Breakfasted with Napoleon in the garden. Had a long medical argument with him, in which he maintained that *his* practice in case of malady—viz., to eat nothing, drink plenty of barley water and no wine, and ride for seven or eight leagues to promote perspiration—was much better than mine.

October 27, 1816—Recommended a purgative to be taken in the morning, and also some other active remedies, which he declined doing, observing that he never had taken any medicine since his childhood; that he knew his own constitution and was convinced that even a small dose would probably produce violent effects; that, moreover, its effects would perhaps be contrary to the efforts of nature.

{184} [Conseil d'état, 1806] Medicine is not an exact and positive science but a science based on conjectures and observations. I would have more confidence in a physician who has not studied the natural sciences than in one who has.

[Conversation, 1816, reported by Las Cases] One among us took the liberty of asking, “If Your Majesty should have dysentery tomorrow, would you still refuse to take medicine?”—”Right now, since I am well, I should say yes without any hesitation,” said the Emperor. “But if I became gravely ill, perhaps I would change my mind and undergo a conversion, like a sick man who is about to die.” Then he restated his lack of faith in medicine. But surgery, he observed, was a different matter. Three times, he said, he had started taking a course in anatomy, but each time his public business and his disgust forced him to break it off. “On one occasion,” he went on, “as a result of a long discussion we had had, Corvisart wanted to convince me by presenting tangible evidence, and with the most abominable malice he came out to Saint-Cloud with a stomach wrapped in a pocket handkerchief. Its sight immediately made me throw up everything I had in mine.”

[Conversation with Dr. Antommarchi, 1819] *Napoleon:* I have a few questions to ask you. You keep talking about the air, about the liver. What action do these two bodies exert on each other? Why is it that this action, fatal to health on this rock [Saint Helena], is beneficial elsewhere?

Antommarchi: No one knows, Your Majesty.

Napoleon: It is not known what particular element in the air damages this or that organ?

Antommarchi: No more than what causes the plague, what differentiates wholesome air from contagious air.

Napoleon: Has no attempt been made to isolate that fatal factor?

Antommarchi: It has been tried, but unsuccessfully. The factor is too subtle and defies discovery by any of the means at the disposal of science.

Napoleon: And yet, the air surrounding a plague victim cannot possibly be composed of the same elements as that surrounding a person in good health?

Antommarchi: I think not, nor do I believe that there are many chemists who would feel tempted to analyze it.

Napoleon: Why not? The laboratory has its heroes just like the battlefield. And think of the difference between the results! Do you not think that the glory of having put an end to a ruthless disease, the mere glory of attempting it, makes up for the dangers of the enterprise?

{185} [Letter to General von Wrede, 1806] You must tranquilize your mind: this is the best way to cure the body.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] The conversation turned to the subject of the plague. The Emperor maintained that it was transmitted through breathing as well as through direct contact. He said that its greatest danger was fear, that fear caused its spread more than anything else, and that its principal seat was in the imagination. During the Egyptian campaign, all those whose imagination was struck by fear died of it. The surest protection, the most efficacious remedy, was moral courage. He himself, he said, had touched the plague-stricken at Jaffa with impunity and had saved many men by deceiving the soldiers for more than two months on the nature of the disease. It was not the plague, they were told, but a bubonic fever. Moreover, he had discovered that the best way to preserve the army from the disease was to keep it on the march and occupied.

Diversion and fatigue were found to be the best prevention.

[Conversation with Dr. Antommarchi, 1820] You know, my dear doctor, the art of healing is simply the art of lulling and calming the imagination.

[Conversation, 1821, related by Dr. Antommarchi] “Suppose that instead of Napoleon I were one of those poor devils on this island and that by dint of beating and whipping my legs I were made to run and work like them, wouldn’t I be cured quickly? Wouldn’t I sweat abundantly? Wouldn’t I recover my balance and my health?”

The more he talked, the warmer he grew about his idea of the extraordinary power of the human will.

“You don’t seem to believe me, doctor, but look: if I were facing, right there, a lion, a tiger, a bear, without any possibility of escape except by running away, don’t you think that my strength would suddenly revive? Wouldn’t my legs obey the impulse of my will? Wouldn’t my nerves sense the call of nature in order to save me from the danger? Well, let me tell you that at this very instant I feel something in me that electrifies me and that makes me believe that my organism still would obey the orders of my senses and my will.”

{186} [Saying reported by Las Cases] One day Napoleon was reproaching someone for his failure to cure himself of his acknowledged vices. “Sir,” he said, “when a man is aware of his moral sickness, he must be able to care for his soul just as he would care for his arm or leg.”

ON PSEUDO SCIENCES

{187} [Conversation, 1816] Mesmer exerted his powers over a person by magnetizing him face to face. If the same person was magnetized from behind without knowing it, he felt nothing. Thus the effect was due, on the

part of that person, to an aberration of the imagination, a weakness of the senses—just as a sleep walker, who at night can run along the edges of roofs without danger, because he is unafraid, would break his neck in daylight, because his senses lose control.

[Same conversation] Look at the idiotic theory of Gall [the founder of phrenology]: he attributes to certain prominences [of the skull] tendencies and crimes which are not inborn but which are merely products of society and of human conventions. What would become of the "bump of thievery" if there were no property? What of the "bump of drunkenness," if there were no alcoholic beverages? What of the "bump of ambition," if there were no society?

[Conversation, 1816] One never must judge a man by his physiognomy. Men must be tested to be known. How many faces I had to judge in my life! What opportunities for acquiring experience! How many denunciations, how many reports have I listened to! And indeed I made it a fixed rule never to allow myself to be influenced either by facial traits or by words.

These words must be placed against the background of the then fashionable theories of Lavater, who thought he could establish a scientific and systematic relationship between facial and moral characteristics. Napoleon's judgment of Mesmer, Gall, and Lavater has been borne out only in a narrow sense, since their theories, faulty though they were, foreshadowed important discoveries.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS AND ARTISTIC CREATION

{188} [Letter to the minister of the interior, 1807] Mathematics, physics, natural history, medicine, and jurisprudence are sciences, because they are made up of facts that can be observed and compared; because the successive discoveries to which they lead are cumulative, each century

adding to the sum, each day enlarging the domain of science; because facts, the relationship of facts to one another, and the method of observing and comparing facts are matters that can be taught and, consequently, learned.

The minister wishes to establish specialized schools of literary studies. If the ideas stated above are correct, it is difficult to understand what is meant by a special school of literature. The plan is to teach eloquence, to teach poetry...but what can be taught in those fields that a young student has not learned in his course of rhetoric?...Creative talent, whether for writing, musical composition, or painting, is an individual gift; it is conditioned by special aptitudes whose development may be furthered by special circumstances, by social or historical conditions. In creating works of the intellect and of genius, intellect or genius attain their highest achievements directly and spontaneously. We have surpassed the Greeks neither in tragedy nor in comedy nor in epic poetry, for the Greeks are still our models, whereas each century of progress has advanced the exact sciences by a few steps, for they are sciences based on facts, observation, and comparison.

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Place a professor of literature side by side with a professor of mathematics. One will teach the laws of astronomy, of optics, of mechanics...in a word, everything that is not taught in the *lycées* because the students there are too young and because such studies, useful though they are to the professions they may choose later but have not yet chosen, demand greater maturity. The professor of literature entertains his students if he has some wit; he stimulates their interest if he has some skill; but he does not expound a single new principle, a single new idea. He establishes no positive rules, and he teaches nothing that is not taught in the high schools. As for himself, he will be no wiser after forty years of teaching

than he had been to begin with. He will know the authors more thoroughly, he will be able to appreciate them better, but his opinions will never amount to more than personal opinions, proving nothing and incapable of furthering the progress of art.

[Conversation, 1816] In antiquity statesmen were also men of letters, and men of letters were statesmen. They cumulated professions, whereas we segregate them absolutely. This famous division of labor, which in our age has brought mechanical pursuits to perfection, is absolutely fatal to the perfection of intellectual production. The quality of a production of the mind is in direct ratio to the universality of its creator.

"AH! GOOD TASTE!"

{189} [Conversation, 1800s] Ah! Good taste—there is another of those classical phrases for which I have no use. It may be my fault, but there are certain rules for which I lack all feeling. For example, I am insensitive to what is called style, either good or bad. I am sensitive only to the forcefulness of thought.

[Reminiscence of Chaptal] I remember that one day I presented him with his likeness on horseback, modeled to absolute perfection at the Sèvres manufactory. He placed it on a table. He knocked off the stirrups, then a leg, and when I made the observation that the artist would die of grief if he saw his work thus mutilated, he replied coolly, "This can easily be fixed with a little paste."

[Conversation, 1816, on his plans for the park of Versailles] I intended to rid those beautiful groves of all their bad taste—those nymphs, those *nouveau riche* ornaments—and to replace them with panoramic representations, executed in masonry, of all the capitals that we had entered victoriously and of all the celebrated battles that have rendered our arms

illustrious. These would have been so many everlasting monuments to our triumphs and our national glory, placed at the gates of the capital of Europe.

{190} [Conseil d'état, 1806] Nothing is beautiful unless it is large. Vastness and immensity can make you forget a great many defects.

[Conversation, 1813] My English garden is the Forest of Fontainebleau, and I want no other.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] Napoleon regretted his inability to transport the Church of Saint Peter's from Rome to Paris. He was shocked by the pettiness of Notre Dame cathedral.

[Conversation, 1816, reported by Las Cases] The Emperor said that the desert had always held a special attraction for him. He had never crossed it without a certain emotion. To him, it was the symbol of immensity, he said. It showed no limits, it had neither beginning nor end: it was a motionless ocean. This spectacle was pleasing to his imagination. And he took pleasure in pointing out that Napoleon means "desert lion."

THE FINE ARTS

{191} [Reminiscence of Chaptal] Napoleon could not understand why anyone should grow enthusiastic over a painting or a statue—since, he said, "they all are mere copies from nature, and there is little merit in copying or imitating."

[From secondary source] Likeness to life is not achieved by an exact reproduction of features, by a little wart on the nose. What the painter must show is the character of a face, the thing that makes it alive....Nobody wants to know if the portraits of great men are exact likenesses. It is enough if their genius lives in them.

{192} [Conversation, 1812] Even in a charcoal-burner's hut you can have

architecture.

{193} [Note, 1806] Triumphal arches would be useless and utterly devoid of any practical purpose—in fact, I would never have ordered one built—if I had not thought that they were a means of encouraging architecture. With the triumphal arches I intend to give work to French sculptors for ten years, at a cost of two hundred thousand francs....

I request Monsieur Daru...to come to an understanding with Monsieur Cretet on the subject of the fountains that were to be set up on the Place de la Révolution and on the site of the Bastille. They must be monumental, with statues and bas-reliefs. The subjects may be taken first of all from the history of the Emperor, second from the history of the Revolution and the history of France. Generally speaking, no opportunity should be lost to humiliate the Russians and the English. William the Conqueror and Du Guesclin might be glorified in these monuments.

[Remark, 1811, on a fountain with figures of naiads spouting water from their breasts] Get rid of those wet nurses: the naiads were virgins.

ON MUSIC

{194} [Letter, 1797] Of all the arts, music has the most influence on the passions; it is the art which a legislator should encourage most. A piece of moral music, composed by a master, cannot fail to affect the listener’s feelings and has much more influence than a good treatise of morals, which convinces our reason without changing our habits.

[Order of the Day, Cairo, December 21, 1798] Every day at noon the regimental bands will give concerts on the public squares facing the hospitals, playing various airs which will cheer the sick and recall to their memories the finest hours of the past campaigns.

[Note, 1806] At the various concerts performed at the Tuileries, the Luxembourg, and elsewhere, it would be good to perform martial songs appropriate to the circumstances and easily retained.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] The drum imitates the sound of the cannon: it is the best of all instruments. [N.B.: In justice to Napoleon, one should add that he was speaking only of military bands.]

{195} [Manuscript, 1791] O Rousseau! Why didst thou live for only sixty years! For the sake of virtue, thou shouldst have been immortal. But hadst thou written nothing but the *Devin du village*, thou wouldst have done much for the happiness of thy fellow humans and earned a statue from men of feeling.{196}

[Reminiscence of Mme de Rémusat] To explain the effect music had on him, and his unchanging preference for the music of Paisiello, he used to say, “The reason is that it is monotonous and that repeated impressions are the only ones that can get a hold on us.”

[Letter, Ludwigsburg, October 4, 1805] Yesterday I heard at the theater of the court the German opera *Don Juan* [Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*]. I imagine that the music of this opera is the same as the one of the opera now being given in Paris. It seemed very good to me.

[Another letter, same date] I am here at the court of Württemberg, and though busy making war, I heard some very good music yesterday [i.e., *Don Giovanni*], However, German singing seemed a little outlandish to me.

[Reminiscence of Mrs. Abell, Saint Helena, 1815, reported in English] He then asked me to sing, and I sang, as well as I could, the Scotch song, “Ye Banks and Braes.” When I finished, he said it was the prettiest English air he had ever heard. I replied it was a Scottish ballad, not English; and he

remarked he thought it too pretty to be English. “Their music is vile—the worst in the world.” He then inquired if I knew any French songs and, among others, “Vive Henri Quatre,” Gretry’s favorite air. I said I did not. He began to hum the air, became abstracted, and, leaving his seat, marched round the room, keeping time to the song he was singing. When he had done, he asked me what I thought of it; and I told him I did not like it at all, for I could not make out the air. In fact, Napoleon’s voice was most unmusical, nor do I think he had any ear for music; for neither on this occasion, nor in any of his subsequent attempts at singing, could I ever discover what tune it was he was executing. He was, nevertheless, a good judge of music, if any Englishwoman may say so, after his sweeping denunciation of our claims to that science, probably from having constantly listened to the best performers. He expressed a great dislike to French music, which, he said, was almost as bad as the English, and that the Italians were the only people who could produce an opera.

ADVICE TO AN ACTOR

Talma was the foremost French tragedian of the Napoleonic era, if we except Napoleon himself. The Emperor and the actor occasionally exchanged trade secrets, and although the accuracy of the two fragments of conversation reproduced below cannot be vouched for, they have the ring of truth.

{197} [On the part of Nero in Racine’s *Britannicus*] Your acting should convey more clearly the struggle between an evil disposition and a good education. I also should like you to gesticulate less. Men of Nero’s character are not expansive: rather, they are concentrated.

[On the part of Julius Caesar in Corneille’s *La Mort de Pompée*] You are fatiguing your arms too much. Heads of empires are not so lavish with

gestures. They know that a gesture is a command and that one look may signify death. Consequently, they are sparing of gestures and looks. Also, there is a line whose meaning eludes you. You make it sound too sincere:

To me a throne and infamy are one...

Caesar isn't saying what he thinks. Don't make Caesar talk like Brutus. When Brutus says that he abhors kings, he should be believed—but Caesar, no. Note that difference.

ON POLITICS, DRAMA, AND DRAMATISTS

{198} [Conversation, December 1, 1805, on the eve of Austerlitz] In our time, since pagan religion has no more hold on us, our tragic theater needs a new motivating force. Politics must be the great mainspring of modern tragedy. Politics must replace on our stage the fatality of the ancients—that fatality which makes a criminal of Oedipus without his being guilty and which causes us to feel pity for Phaedra, whose crimes and weaknesses we blame in part on the gods....It is wrong to believe that tragic subjects have been exhausted; many can be found in political necessity, but someone is needed who can touch and vibrate to that chord. The principle of political necessity is a rich source of strong emotions, a fertile germ of the most dramatic situations, a new fate no less imperious, no less ineluctable than that of the ancients, whose [artistic] advantages it would recapture. All that is needed is to bring one's dramatic characters into conflict with a new set of passions, a new set of tendencies, under the absolute influence of that potent necessity. Thus everything that is called coup d'état or political crime would become a fit subject for a tragedy: honor being mitigated by necessity, a new and sustained kind of pathos would result.

[Letter, 1806] Fate pursued the family of Atreus, and the heroes were guilty without being criminal. They shared in the crimes of the gods. In

modern history, this device has no place. The active principle that must be employed is the nature of things. It is politics which leads to catastrophe without there being any real crime.

[Conversation, 1808, reported by Goethe in German] The Emperor came back to the subject of drama and made very significant remarks, like a man who was observing the tragic stage with the intentness of a criminal judge and who had deeply felt the deviation of the French theater from nature and truth. Thus he also was led to criticize the tragedies of fate. “What do they want from fate in our age?” he said. “Politics is fate.”

{199} [Conversation, early 1800s] As for the French poets, the only one I understand well is your Corneille. There’s a man who had a feeling for politics! If he had had the training, he would have been a statesman. I believe I can appreciate him better than anybody else, because when I judge his work I exclude all dramatic emotions. For instance, not long ago I found the explanation of the dénouement in *Cinna* [in which Augustus forgives Cinna, who has plotted against his life, and offers him his friendship]. At first, all I saw in it was a device for a touching fifth act. Moreover, clemency in itself is such a miserably petty virtue—unless it rests on political motives—that the clemency of Augustus, who is suddenly transformed into a good-natured prince, appears to me an unworthy end to that fine tragedy. But one day Monvel, playing the part in my presence, revealed to me the secret of that grand conception. He said the line, “Let us be friends, Cinna,” in so cunning and wily a tone of voice that I understood that his action was merely a tyrant’s feint, and what had seemed to me a puerile sentiment I now approved as a calculated ruse. This line must always be spoken in such a manner that among all those who hear it Cinna alone is deceived.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] Great tragedy, the Emperor said, is the school of great men....It is not necessary, he asserted, to be a poet in order to appreciate it; it is enough to have a knowledge of men and things, to have elevated views, and to be a statesman. Warming to the subject, he continued: “Tragedy warms the soul, elevates the heart, can and must create heroes. In these respects, perhaps, France owes many of her finest deeds to Corneille. Indeed, gentlemen, had he still been living in my time, I would have created him a prince.”

{200} [Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] “Although Racine has created undoubted masterpieces,” the Emperor said in conclusion, “he nevertheless has permeated them with a perpetual mawkishness, with endless talk of love, with that sweetish tone of his, and with his fastidious ideas.”...And while he was at it, he also condemned the famous campaign plan of Mithridates [in Racine’s tragedy of that name]. “It may be a fine speech,” he said, “but as a military conception it lacks good sense.”

[Conversation, 1817] Racine didn’t know geography.

{201} [Conversation, 1816] It cannot be denied that *Tartuffe* as a whole shows the mark of a master. It is the masterpiece of an inimitable personality. However, this play is of such a nature that I am not surprised at the animated controversy its appearance aroused at Versailles or at the hesitation of Louis XIV [to endorse it against its critics]. If there is anything surprising, it is that he allowed it to be performed. In my opinion it shows piety in such odious colors, and one of its scenes presents so stark, so completely indecent a situation, that as far as I am concerned I do not hesitate to say that if the play had been written under my reign I would not have allowed its performance.

PHILOSOPHIZING ON HOMER

{202} [Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] “The *Iliad*,” said the Emperor, “is, like Genesis and the whole Bible, the symbol and token of its age. In composing it, Homer was poet, orator, historian, legislator, geographer, theologian: he was the encyclopedist of his era.”

...What struck him most, he remarked, was the coarseness of the manners combined with the perfection of the ideas. Heroes are shown slaughtering cattle for meat and preparing it with their own hands, while their speeches display rare eloquence and a great civilization.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] After dinner, the Emperor resumed the reading of the *Odyssey*. We had reached the combat of Irus with Ulysses, on the threshold of Ulysses’ own palace, with both men dressed as beggars. The Emperor expressed strong disapproval of this episode. He found it wretched, dirty, improper, unworthy of a king.

“Besides,” he added, “now that I have run out of critical objections, I can guess what still affects me. I put myself in Ulysses’ place—it’s the fear of being beaten up by a ruffian. It is not given to every ruler, to every general, to have the strong shoulders of his guards or grenadiers. Not everybody who wants to can be a porter. Good old Homer takes care of all that by presenting his heroes as so many giants. But things are different with us. Where would we be, all of us here,” he said, glancing at each of us, “if we were still living in the olden times when a strong arm was the real scepter? There’s Noverraz”—his valet—”who is serving us: he would be our king. We must admit that civilization does everything for the soul and favors it wholly at the expense of the body.”

THE LOGISTICS OF THE TROJAN HORSE

{203} [Dictation, 1820] The Second Book of the *Aeneid* is considered to be Virgil's masterpiece. It deserves this reputation as far as style is concerned, but it is far from deserving it if content is considered.

That wooden horse may have been a popular tradition, but the tradition is ridiculous and altogether unworthy of an epic poem. Nothing like it can be found in the *Iliad*, where everything is in harmony with truth and military practice. Is it possible to assume the Trojans were such imbeciles as not to send a fishing boat to the island of Tenedos and not to make sure that the thousand ships of the Greeks had really left? Besides, from the towers of Ilion the roadstead of Tenedos was in sight. Is it possible to believe that Ulysses and the flower of the Greeks were so inept as to lock themselves up in a wooden horse—that is to say, deliver themselves tied hand and foot to their implacable enemies? Supposing the horse contained only a hundred warriors; even so its weight must have been enormous, and it is unlikely that it could be transported from the seashore to the walls of Ilion in a single day, especially since it had to cross two rivers.

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The warriors who are hidden in the wooden horse, to whom Sinon opens the gate, come out only when the Greek fleet, which has left Tenedos while everybody was asleep and the night was dark, has already disembarked the army. In other words, this could not have taken place before 1 A.M.; and indeed, it is only at that hour that the guards fall asleep and Sinon is able to open the barrier. Thus the entire action of the Second Book on the sack of Troy takes place from 1 A.M. to sunrise, that is to say, within three or four hours. All this is absurd. Troy cannot have been taken, burned, and destroyed in less than a fortnight. There was an army in Troy. That army did

not run away, and so it must have made a stand in each of the palaces. Aeneas, who stayed in his father's palace, in a wood about half a league distant from Troy, is not informed of the capture and burning of the city until the apparition of Hector's ghost. Even if Anchises' house had been two miles away from the city, surely the noise and tumult of the city's capture, the heat of the burning houses at the edge of the city, would have waked the men and the animals. Ilion did not fall in a single night, especially not in so short a night. Even if the army that was supposed to be there for her defense had evacuated her, it was materially impossible for the Greek army to take possession and to burn the city in less than several days. Aeneas was not the only warrior in Ilion, and yet Virgil does not mention anybody else. The many heroes who play so brilliant a part in the *Iliad* must have done their part, too, each defending one of the city's quarters.

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If Homer had described the taking of Troy, he would not have treated it like the capture of a fort but would have allotted it the required time—at least eight days and nights. Reading the *Iliad,* one senses in every line that Homer has been to war and that he did not, as the commentators assert, spend his life in the schools of Chios. Reading the *Aeneid,* one senses that this work was written by a schoolmaster who never did a thing in his life. Indeed, it is impossible to understand what determined Virgil to begin and end the capture, burning, and sack of Troy within a few hours' time. In that short interval he even has the Greeks pile up all their loot in central magazines: Anchises' house must have been near Troy, since within these few hours, and despite the fighting, Aeneas makes several trips there. It took Scipio seventeen days to burn Carthage, which had been abandoned by its inhabitants. It took eleven days for Moscow to burn down, though largely built of wood; and to take possession of a city of that size, a

conquering army needs several days. Troy was a large city, for the Greeks never tried to encircle it, although they had a hundred thousand men. When Aeneas returns to Ilion that night, he finds

Ulysses keeping guard over the victors' spoils;

There, heaped upon the ground, lay all the wealth of Troy. For that operation alone more than two weeks are required, and it is not during the confusion that goes with taking a city by assault that people will waste their time piling up treasures in central magazines.

ON LITERATURE AND WRITERS

{204} [Letter, 1806] The statistics of my armies are, as far as I am concerned, the most enjoyable literary works in my library and those which I read with the most pleasure in my moments of relaxation.

[Letter to Cambacérès, 1806] The complaint has been made that we have no literature. That is the fault of the minister of the interior. It is ridiculous to order a pastoral poem as you would order a muslin dress.

[Letter to the minister of the interior, 1807] Poetry is the child of society....If Italy has had so many good poets, this is because Italy contained so many small courts and idle societies that rivaled one another.

[Conversation, 1817] The French language is not a well-made language. I ought to have codified it.

{205} [Letter, 1806] Good God! How stupid men of letters are! A fellow who is capable of translating a poem is incapable of leading fifteen men.

[Letter, 1807] I regard scholars and wits the same as coquettish women; one should frequent them and talk with them, but never choose one's wife from among the latter or one's ministers from among the former.

{206} [Conversation, early 1800s] I used to like Ossian, but for the same reason that I like to hear the whisper of the wind and the waves of the sea.

{207} [Conversation, early 1800s, on Voltaire's *Mahomet*] His Mohammed is neither a prophet nor an Arab but an impostor who seems to have been educated at the École Polytechnique.

[Conversation, 1803] I read everything that is published: my secretary shows it to me every morning with a written report. The things now published are wretched—I am disgusted. What a difference between today's writing and Voltaire! The more I read Voltaire the better I like him. That man is always reasonable, not a charlatan, not a fanatic....I even like his historical writings a great deal, although they are much criticized. His *Pucelle* [a satirical poem on Joan of Arc] is not good for young people to read, but it cheers the mature. Voltaire is for mature people. Until I was sixteen, I would have fought to the death for Rousseau against all the friends of Voltaire. Today, it's the other way around. I am especially disgusted with Rousseau since I have seen the Orient. Savage man is a dog.

[Conversation, 1816] To come back to Voltaire, it is surprising how little [his plays] bear reading. Once his pompous diction and the illusion of the stage no longer impose upon critical analysis and good taste, he immediately loses a thousand percent.

[Conversation, 1816] If Voltaire ruled contemporary opinion, if he was the hero of his age, this was only because it was an age of dwarfs.

{208} [Conversation, 1816, concerning the letters of Mme de Sévigné] If you read much of her, nothing stays. Her letters are like egg fluff—you can eat your fill of them without overloading your stomach.

{209} [Conversation, 1817, related by Gourgaud] The Emperor declares

that he cannot finish *Clarissa Harlowe*, and yet he remembers that when he was eighteen he devoured it. “This gives one an idea of the psychological time that elapses between eighteen years and forty-eight....Lovelace is a blackguard who keeps telling those who serve him that he will make them rich. All he has is £2,000 a year: I figured out his budget right away. What I didn’t see when I was eighteen was that he even went to brothels.”

{210} [Conseil d'état, 1803] I have read him [Shakespeare]. There is nothing that comes anywhere near Corneille and Racine. It’s impossible to finish reading any of his plays; they are pitiful. As to Milton, there is only the invocation to the sun and two or three other passages—the rest is just a rhapsody....France need not envy England anything.

{211} [Conversation, 1800s] The difficulty is not so much in buying Monsieur de Chateaubriand as in paying him the price he thinks he is worth.

[Conversation, 1817] Chateaubriand is one of those cowards who would spit at a corpse.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] Nature gave Chateaubriand the sacred flame; his works testify to it. His style is not that of a Racine, it is that of a prophet. He is the only man in the world who could say with impunity, in the Chamber of Peers, that “it would be enough to wave Napoleon’s gray coat and his hat at the end of a stick off the coast of Brest to make all Europe run to arms.” If ever Chateaubriand should be at the helm of public business, he may possibly make mistakes, like so many others who have foundered, but what is certain is that anything great, anything of a national scope is suited to his genius.

{212} [First words on meeting Goethe, 1808] Here’s a man!

{213} [Conversation, 1800s] When Mme de Genlis wishes to define virtue,

she always speaks of it as if she had just discovered it.

{214} [Conversation, 1800s] That woman [Mme de Staël] teaches thinking to those who never thought of thinking or who had forgotten how to do it.

[Conversation, 1816, on Mme de Staël's novel *Corinne*, related by Las Cases] Napoleon said that he could not finish it. Mme de Staël had portrayed herself so faithfully in her heroine that she managed to make him detest Corinne. "I can see her," he said, "I can hear her, I can sense her, I want to run away, I throw down the book....However, I shall persist; I want to see how it ends, for I still think that it is an interesting work. Yet I cannot forgive Mme de Staël for having run down the French in her novel. That family of Mme de Staël's certainly is a strange one. Her father [Necker], her mother [Suzanne Curchod], and herself, all three kneeling before one another in perpetual adoration, smoking one another out with reciprocal incense for the edification and mystification of the public. Mme de Staël, however, may pride herself on having surpassed her noble parents when she wrote that her feelings for her father were such that she was surprised at not having been jealous of her mother."{215}

"Mme de Staël was ardent in her passions," he continued. "She was wild and frantic in her expressions. Here is what the police read when she was under surveillance: 'I am far away from you,' she wrote to her husband, apparently.{216} 'Come instantly, I command you, I want it, I am imploring you on my knees! My hand has seized a dagger. If you hesitate, I shall kill myself, and you will be guilty of my destruction.'" This was Corinne, Corinne all over.

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THE ART OF RULING

My policies are frank and open, because they are the results of long meditations and of strength.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF POLITICS

{217} [Letter to Talleyrand, 1797] True politics...is merely the calculus of combinations and of chances.

[Letter to the king of Prussia, 1804] The policies of all the powers are inherent in their geography.

[Letter to Joseph, king of Naples, 1807] In political administration, no problem is ever simple. It can never be reduced to the question whether a certain measure is good or not.

[Repeated saying] Passions change, politics are immutable.

[From secondary source] State policy is merely common sense applied to great things.

{218} [Conversation, 1800s] Great men are never cruel without necessity.

[Conversation, 1800s] Bloodletting is among the ingredients of political medicine.

[Conversation, 1816] In war as in politics, no evil, even if it is permissible under the rules, is excusable unless it is absolutely necessary. Everything beyond that is a crime.

[Conversation, 1816] If fifty thousand men were to die for the good of the State, I certainly would weep for them, but political necessity comes before everything else.

{219} [Letter, 1811] A great State can never adopt the motto “Do you duty, come what may.” That is the motto of a paladin.

[Conversation with Talleyrand, late 1813, as related by Talleyrand to Mme de Rémusat] You must know that I am not in the least afraid of committing an act of cowardice if it were useful to me. Look here, at bottom there is nothing either noble or base in this world. My character possesses all those qualities that are capable of strengthening my power and of deceiving those who imagine that they know me. Frankly, I am a coward, indeed I am—essentially a coward. I give you my word of honor that I would not experience the least repugnance toward committing what the world calls a dishonorable action.

[Conversation, April 1815] Don’t talk to me of goodness, of abstract justice, of natural law. Necessity is the highest law; public welfare is the highest justice. Unto each day the evil thereof; to each circumstance its own law; each man according to his nature.

[Conversation, 1815] A distinction must be made between the actions of a sovereign, who acts as a collective person, and those of a private individual, who has only his own feelings to consider. Politics allows and even commands the one to do what would be inexcusable in the other.

[Conversation, 1817] Governments keep their promises only when they are forced or when it is to their advantage to do so.

ON WOLVES AND LAMBS

Although Napoleon heeded Machiavelli’s well-known advice to be both fox and lion, he did not care to be identified with wolves. One day in July, 1816, Tristan de Montholon, the seven-year-old son of one of Napoleon’s companions in exile, recited La Fontaine’s fable, “The Wolf and the Lamb,”

for the Emperor—an embarrassing choice, especially because the wolf of the fable addresses the lamb as “Sire.” Napoleon’s comment follows, as related by Las Cases.

The Emperor found the fable much too ironical to be within the reach of a child’s intelligence.{220} Besides, he said, its principles and its moral were deficient—and this was the first time, he remarked, that this thought had struck him. It was not true that “might makes right”; and even if ever it were so, then it was an evil, an abuse that had to be righted. Therefore, the wolf should have choked on the lamb he was devouring.

THE STATESMAN’S HEART AND HEAD

{221} [Conversation, 1800s] Is a statesman made for sensibility? Is he not a completely eccentric being—always alone on the one side, with the world on the other? He must look through the eyeglasses of his politics, though he must beware lest they either magnify or reduce something. And while scrutinizing the objects of his attention, he also must take care to pull the strings he holds in his hand. His chariot often is hitched to unequal horses: you are the judge whether he ought to fritter away his energy to avoid giving offense to certain sentimental conventions, so dear to the common run of men! Has he the right to take notice of family ties, of affections, of childish social considerations? And look at his situation—how many separate actions of his general design are criticized, although they are certain to contribute to the great end, an end of which not everyone is aware! One day these actions will complete the immense creation of a colossus for the admiration of posterity. Wretches, will you keep back your praise because you are afraid the motion of that great machine might produce on you the same effect as did Gulliver on the Lilliputians, when by moving his leg he crushed them? Take courage, be ahead of your age,

enlarge your imaginations, see far into the distance, and you will realize that the great men whom you believe to be violent, cruel, and what not are merely politic. They know themselves, they judge themselves better than you judge them, and if they are really able, they know how to master their passions, for they calculate the effects of even these.

[Conversation, 1800s] It is for the sake of a remote, indeterminate goal, which they themselves do not fully apprehend, that men become heroes and that the inspired minority triumphs over the inert masses. Those lawgivers who have influenced history most were very much aware of this.

{222} [Repeated saying] A true master of politics is able to calculate, down to the smallest fraction, the advantages to which he may put his very faults.

[Conversation, December 1812] They think I am stern, even hard-hearted. So much the better—this makes it unnecessary for me to justify my reputation. My firmness is taken for callousness. I shall not complain, since this notion is responsible for the good order that is prevailing, so that there is nothing that needs to be repressed....Look here, Caulaincourt, I am human. No matter what some people say, I too have entrails, a heart—but the heart of a sovereign. I am not moved by the tears of a duchess, but the sufferings of the people touch me.

[Conversation, 1816] Remember that a man, a true man, never hates. His rages and his bad moods never last beyond the present moment—like electric shocks. A man made for public life and authority never takes account of personalities; he only takes account of things, of their weight and their consequences.

[Conversation, 1816] A statesman’s heart must be in his head.

“THE STRONG ARE GOOD”

{223} [Manuscript, 1791] The strong are good; only the weak are wicked.

[Manuscript, before 1793] Force is the law of animals; men are ruled by conviction.

{224} [Stenographic transcript, Conseil d'état, 1804] A magistrate is not a father: he must be just and severe. Only tyrants are fathers.

[Conseil d'état, 1804] There is no strength without justice.

[Letter to Lebrun, 1805] You know very well that, where government is concerned, justice means strength as well as virtue.

[Letter to Junot, 1806] Nothing is more salutary than a terrible example given at the right time.

[Letter to Joseph, king of Naples, 1806] If you do not make yourself feared from the start, you will come to grief.

[Letter to Louis, king of Holland, 1807] When it is said of a ruler that he is a good king, his reign is a failure.

WHETHER RULERS SHOULD BE POPULAR

{225} [Conversation, 1800s] If you antagonize people, you gain no advantage in letting them keep any power. Half-measures never achieve useful results, and old wheels do not work well in new machines.

[Conversation, 1800] The question is not whether there is a large group that is hostile to me. The question is whether in each class of the people some chord responds to me. There are many Frenchmen who have ten such chords. Everywhere in Europe, some chord is for me. There are people who respond to my laws, others to my victories—everywhere there is at least one chord. All that needs be done is to touch it.

[Letter to Louis, king of Holland, 1806] To promote the welfare of the people you must defy the opinions of the weak and the ignorant.

[Letter to Joseph, 1814] If the people notices that, instead of doing what is useful to it, its rulers seek to please it, inevitably it comes to look upon itself as sovereign and retains but scant respect for the government.

[Conversation, December 1815] Without doubt the first duty of a ruler is to do what the people wants. But what the people wants is almost never the same as what the people says. Its will and needs ought to be found not so much in the people's mouth as in the ruler's heart.

{226} [Conseil d'état, 1801] It is wrong to believe that the people does not act unless it is led: the people has an instinct that pushes it and makes it act spontaneously. During the Revolution it led the leaders.

[Conversation, early 1800s] To govern through a party is to become dependent on it sooner or later. They will not catch me at it: I am national.

[Conversation, 1816] Men who have changed the world never achieved their success by winning the chief citizens to their side, but always by stirring the masses. The first method is that of a schemer and leads only to mediocre results; the other method is the path of genius and changes the face of the world.

[Conversation, 1816] So long as I hold my place in the heart of the masses, I need not worry about the leaders; and if I had only the leaders in my favor, of what use would they be to me against the torrent of the masses?

"NEVER ADMIT A MISTAKE"

{227} [Reminiscence of the duchesse d'Abrantès] I remember that one day Bonaparte asked me to repeat to him the conversation my father had had

with Monsieur Necker and Necker's expression about the States-General: "It was not I who made the mistake [of calling the States-General], and now they make me responsible for it!"

Bonaparte made me repeat that sentence *three times.* I still can see him. We were at dinner. He was holding his glass, brought it to his lips, took a small sip, put it back on the table, drank another sip, and went through these motions seven or eight times while repeating Monsieur Necker's sentence in a low voice. Finally, he rose brusquely and said: "No doubt he was responsible. That is why he should have examined his strength before accepting the burden."

[Letter, 1813] The greatest immorality is to take on a job one does not know.

{228} [Message on the state of the Empire, 1804] Fear and uncertainty hasten the fall of empires. They are a thousand times deadlier than the risks and losses of an unsuccessful war.

[Conversation, Moscow, 1812] In politics you must never retreat, never retrace your steps, never admit a mistake—otherwise, you are discredited. If you have made a mistake, you must persevere—that will put you in the right.

ADVICE TO GOVERNORS AND KINGS

[Instructions to Eugène Beauharnais, 1805, on his nomination as viceroy of Italy]{229} Dissimulation is natural in a mature man; to you, it must be a matter of principle and self-control. When you have spoken your mind needlessly, admit to yourself that you have made a mistake, and you will not make it again. As for the nation you are about to govern, you must display a suitable esteem, the more so because you will discover reasons for

liking it less. The time will come when you will realize that there is little difference between one nation and another. The purpose of your administration being the welfare of my Italian subjects, you must begin by sacrificing your prejudices against those customs of theirs which you resent so violently. In any post other than that of viceroy of Italy you must pride yourself on being a Frenchman; but here [in Italy] you must make them forget that you are French, and you cannot succeed in this unless you can convince the Italians that you like them. They know that there is no love without esteem. Cultivate their language and their society; give them special proofs of your esteem at your receptions; approve of what they approve and like what they like.

Speak as little as possible. Your knowledge is too limited and your education has been too neglected for you to engage freely in discussions. Be able to listen, and be assured that silence often produces the same effect as wisdom. Be not ashamed of asking questions. Although you are a viceroy, you are only twenty-three years old, and no matter what flatterers may tell you, everybody is secretly aware of what you know and accords you his esteem not so much for what he thinks you are as for what he hopes you will be.

[Letter to Eugène, 1805] Do not let the Italians forget that I am master to do as I like. This is necessary for all peoples, but especially for the Italians, who obey only a voice of command. They will esteem you only to the degree to which they fear you, and they will fear you only to the degree to which they are aware that their duplicity and treacherous character are known to you.

{230} [Letter to Joseph, then king of Spain, 1809] Five sixths of Madrid are good people. But honest people need encouragement, and this is

possible only if the mob is kept in its place. Here [in Valladolid] they did the impossible to obtain a pardon for the ruffians who have been condemned. I refused to listen, I had them hanged, and I have realized since that at bottom those people [the intercessors] were very glad not to have been listened to. I believe it is necessary that, especially at the beginning, your government should show some vigor in dealing with the rabble. The rabble loves and esteems only those it fears, and only if you make yourself feared by the rabble can you make yourself loved and esteemed by the whole nation.

{231} [Letter to Jérôme, then king of Westphalia, 1808] There are three things I commend to you. First, respect, gratitude, and loyalty to me and to the French people, to whom you owe everything. Second, strictest economy, so as not to bring out the contrast between the miserable conditions that are weighing down your subjects and unbridled luxury and waste. Economy is necessary at all times but especially at the beginning of a reign, when public opinion is being formed. Economy does not mean merely that you should have no debts but also that, of the six million francs on your civil list, you spend three million for your household, save a million and a half for unforeseen events—such as marriages, feasts, and building expenses—and save another million and a half to build up over the next ten years a reserve of fifteen million....Finally, use your time to learn what you do not know—cavalry, infantry, and artillery tactics and the administration of justice and of finance. When you have fulfilled these conditions, you will deserve my esteem as well as that of France and of your subjects. To accomplish all this, there are a great many reflections you could make, a great many reforms you could put into practice, and much that you could change in your ways.

[Letter to Jérôme, 1809] You are king and brother of the Emperor: these

are ridiculous qualifications in war. You must be a soldier, and again a soldier, and nothing but a soldier. You must take no ministers with you, no diplomatic corps, no pomp. You must bivouac with your outposts, be on horseback night and day, go with the vanguard to get your intelligence at first hand—or else stay in your seraglio.

You are making war like a satrap. Is it from me, good God! that you have learned this?

{232} [Letter to Louis, then king of Holland, 1806] More energy! More energy!

[To Louis, 1807] Between meditating an action and carrying it out you must put an interval of three years.

{233} [Letter to Daru, then Napoleon's commissioner in Prussia, 1807] It would be a joke if the conduct of the victor had to be justified to the vanquished.

{234} [Conversation, 1816, on what Louis XVIII ought to do to keep the recalcitrant in check] There is nothing like summary courts-martial to keep the lower classes and the rabble in line. Only by terror can the Bourbons maintain themselves in France; if they weaken, they are lost. The harder they are on the French, the better for them. Hang, exile, persecute—that's what they must do. In 1814 they did everything with kid gloves, and so they were kicked out. The French nation has no character; it does everything by fashion. Today it is for one party, tomorrow for another, saying it has never been for anything else....The Bourbons ought to send one hundred thousand veterans to Santo Domingo and let the climate and the blacks take care of them, thus getting rid of both the soldiers and the blacks.

THE ART OF USING MEN

{235} [Conversation, 1816] A legislator must know how to take advantage of even the defects of those he wants to govern.

[Letter to Eugène Beauharnais, 1806] I know all of Caprara's defects: I recommend him to you.

{236} [Letter, 1796] The great art of governing consists in not letting men grow old in their jobs.

[Conversation, 1802] The art of choosing men is not nearly so difficult as the art of enabling those one has chosen to attain their full worth.

[Letter to Eugène, 1806] The art consists in making others work rather than in wearing oneself out.

This is good advice, but the following anecdote illustrates Napoleon's inability to leave even the most trivial details to others.

[Reminiscence of Chaptal] Once among many times, Josephine was to take the waters at Aachen. The First Consul had me called [Chaptal was then minister of the interior] and said, "Josephine is leaving tomorrow for her water cure. I must dictate her itinerary and outline her conduct. Write." And he dictated twenty-one large sheets of paper.

ON DIPLOMACY

{237} [Letter to Joseph Bonaparte, French plenipotentiary at the peace negotiations with Austria, 1800] You must be aware that making confidences is a part of diplomacy and that Count Cobenzl [the Austrian plenipotentiary], who entered the diplomatic career in his childhood, never confides anything except what he wants to be known.

[Letter to Talleyrand, 1801] It is an ambassador's duty to stand up for his

nation’s [past] foreign policy in any era and under any government whatsoever.

[Letter to Talleyrand, 1802] [Tell the French minister in Washington] that the first qualification of a diplomat is the ability to keep silent; that in the foreign service there are few conversations, that conversations are conferences;...that the foremost quality expected in a nation’s representative is to see things not as they are seen in the country where he is but as they are seen in the country which is represents.

[Marginal note on a diplomatic report, 1802] To negotiate is not to do as one likes.

[Instructions to Eugène Beauharnais, 1805] Ambassadors are, in the full meaning of the term, titled spies.

[Repeated saying] International incidents must not be allowed to shape foreign policy; foreign policy must shape the incidents.

ON SECRET POLICE AND SPIES

As is well-known, Napoleon made extensive and expert use of secret police and espionage agents. His opinion of them, however, was low.

{238} [Conversation with an officer, Elba, 1814 or 1815] So you think the police foresees and knows everything. The police invents more than it discovers.

[Conversation, 1817] The Paris police is more feared than efficient. There is a great deal of charlatanism in it. It is very difficult to know what a person does every day: the mails yield excellent information, but I am not sure that the advantages make up for the evil. The French are so peculiar that often they write things which they don’t believe, and this leads to errors. By violating the secrecy of the mails one acquires wrong biases.

{239} [Instructions to Eugène Beauharnais, 1805] Never believe a spy. In employing them, there are more drawbacks than advantages.

[Letter, 1813] Whatever the spies and secret agents say, unless it is something they have seen with their own eyes, is nothing; and often, even if they have seen it, it is not much.

[Conversation, 1817, reported in English] It is necessary that there should be in this world such men as jailers, scavengers, butchers, and hangmen—but still one does not like to accept any of those employments. {240}

"THE MOST HUMANE METHOD"

{241} [Letter to Fouché, 1805] The art of the police consists in punishing rarely and severely.

[Letter to Fouché, 1809] Authority should make itself felt as little as possible and should not weigh on the people needlessly.

{242} [Conversation, 1817, on the events of 13 Vendémiaire, 1795, reported in English] I made the troops fire ball{243} at first, because to a mob, who are ignorant of the effect of firearms, it is the worst possible policy to start out by firing blanks. For the populace, hearing a great noise, are a little frightened after the first discharge, but, looking around them and seeing nobody killed or wounded, they pluck up their spirits, begin immediately to despise you, become twice as insolent, and rush on fearlessly, and it becomes necessary to kill ten times the number that would have been killed if ball had been used in the first place. For, with a mob, everything depends on the first impression made upon it.

[Letter to General Reynier, 1798] Peace has been completely restored in Cairo....The rebels have lost a couple of thousand men. Every night, we

have about thirty heads cut off, including many of the leaders'. I think this will be a good lesson to them.

[Letter to General Hédouville, in charge of repressing the Vendée uprising, 1800] The First Consul believes that it would serve as a salutary example to burn down two or three large communes chosen among those whose conduct is worst. Experience has taught him that a spectacularly severe act is, in the conditions you are facing, the most humane method. Only weakness is inhuman.

[Letter to Berthier, 1807] Send a special courier to Marshal Soult to acquaint him with the event that has occurred at Königsberg, where two actors, who appeared on the stage in the roles of French officers, have been hissed. You will inform Marshal Soult that I have demanded satisfaction from the king of Prussia for this insult and that I have requested him to have the chief guilty parties shot.

[Unsigned decree, 1813] The prince of Eckmühl [Marshal Davout] is appointed governor general of the departments forming the 32d military area [the Rhineland], He is invested with all the extraordinary police powers made necessary by the situation [i.e., the general anti-Napoleonic uprising in Germany]. He is authorized to take hostages; to draw by lot every tenth inhabitant of such communes as have misbehaved and to order them shot; to burn down any rebellious commune that puts up armed resistance; to pass sentence by *ad hoc* courts-martial on all individuals taken with arms in hand and charged with having provoked or abetted the rebellion; and, finally, to declare all troublemakers outside our protection and outside the law, to be killed with impunity.

Examples of such drastically humane severity could be multiplied *ad nauseam.* Despite a decidedly sadistic streak, however, Napoleon appears to

have acted thus from cold calculation rather than impulsive cruelty. Just what he understood by “needless” reprisals is illustrated in the following utterance, on the unspeakable blood bath that took place in Lyons during the Terror.

[Conversation, 1817] Collot d’Herbois committed atrocities in Lyons. It is inconceivable how he could order the shooting of five or six thousand individuals: certainly, in a city like Lyons, the execution of fifty or sixty ringleaders would have been more than enough.

ON HIS ROYAL COLLEAGUES

{244} [On Joseph, king of Spain; letter, 1813] If there was a man the army needed, it was a general; if there was a man it had better been without, it was the king.

[On Louis, king of Holland; conversation, 1816] Louis is intelligent and he is not a bad fellow. But, with these qualities, a man can do many foolish things and cause a great deal of harm.

{245} [On Alexander I of Russia; letter to Josephine, Erfurt, 1808] I am satisfied with Alexander; he must be satisfied with me. If he were a woman, I think I would make him my mistress.

[On the same; to Caulaincourt, 1812, during his flight to Paris] To be very able, he lacks only decision.

[On the same; conversation, 1816] He has wit and grace; he is educated, and he has a seductive personality. But he should not be trusted: he lacks frankness, he is a true Byzantine Greek. However, he does not lack convictions, whether sincere or pretended. Nobody will ever believe the subject on which I had to argue with him once: he tried to tell me that the principle of heredity was an abuse in a monarchy, and I had to spend over

an hour and display all my eloquence and logic in proving to him that on the principle of heredity rested the peace and happiness of a nation. Perhaps he was mystifying me, for he is subtle and clever. He may go far.

{246} [On Francis I of Austria; conversation, 1817, reported by Dr. O'Meara, in English] The emperor of Austria he pronounced to be a good and religious man, but a blockhead—a man who, though he did not want common sense, never did anything of himself but was led by the nose by Metternich or someone else. As long as he had a bad minister, his government would be bad, as he entirely trusted to him and only paid attention to botany and gardening.

{247} [On Frederick William III of Prussia; conversation, 1817, reported in English] When I went to see the king of Prussia, instead of a library I found he had a large room, like an arsenal, furnished with shelves and pegs, in which were placed fifty or sixty jackets of various cuts. Every day he changed his fashion and put on a different one. He was a tall, dry-looking fellow and would give a good idea of Don Quixote. He attached more importance to the cut of a dragoon or a hussar uniform than would have been necessary for the salvation of a kingdom. At Jena, his army performed the finest and most spectacular maneuvers, but I soon put a stop to this tomfoolery and taught them that to fight and to execute dazzling maneuvers and wear splendid uniforms were very different matters. If the French army had been commanded by a tailor, the king of Prussia would certainly have gained that day.

[On Queen Louise of Prussia at Tilsit, 1807; conversation, 1817] She received me in tragic tones, like Chimène [in Corneille's *Le Cid*]: "Sire! Justice, justice! Magdeburg!" She went on in this fashion, which embarrassed me a good deal. Finally, to make her change, I asked her to be

seated. Nothing is better suited for cutting a tragic scene short; once a person has sat down, it turns into comedy.

{248} [On Charles IV and Maria Luisa of Spain; letter to Talleyrand, Bayonne, May 1, 1808] King Charles is a good man. I do not know whether it is on account of his position or his circumstances,{249} but he has the air of a kind and open patriarch. The queen wears her heart and her life on her face; enough said—it passes the boldest imagination.

[On Ferdinand VII of Spain; letter to Talleyrand, Bayonne, April 25, 1808] The king of Prussia is a hero compared to the prince of the Asturias. He has not said a word to me yet. He is indifferent to everything, very materialistic, eats four times a day, and hasn't an idea in his head.

{250} [On Bernadotte—later Charles XIV of Sweden; conversation, 1816] Bernadotte was the snake we sheltered in our bosom. No sooner had he left us [to become crown prince of Sweden] than he began to scheme with our enemies, and we had to watch and fear him. Later [in 1813] he became one of the chief active causes of our ruin. It was he who gave the enemy the key to our policies and to the tactics of our armies. It was he who showed them the roads across the sacred soil!

ON DIVERSE STATESMEN

{251} [On Talleyrand; conversation, 1817] One may say that this man is immorality personified. I have never known a being more profoundly immoral.

[On the same; conversation, 1812] I am not blaming him [for his deviousness]. He judges things well. He is the most capable minister I ever had.

{252} [On Fouché; conversation, 1816] Fouché needed intrigue like food.

He intrigued always, everywhere, every way, with everybody. One never came across anything without being sure that he had a hand in it. His only occupation was to run after something; he had the mania of wanting to be everything. Always in everybody's shoes.

{253} [On Savary, Fouché's successor as minister of police; conversations with Mme de Rémusat] If I ordered Savary to do away with his wife and his children, I am sure he would not hesitate....He is a man who wants to be continually corrupted.

{254} [Conversation, 1800s] Metternich comes close to being a statesman: he lies very well.

[Letter, 1814] Metternich thinks he is leading Europe, and everybody is leading him.

{255} [On General Armstrong, American minister in Paris; letter to the foreign minister, 1810] Send a special courier to America, with a ciphered dispatch, in order to make them understand there that the American government is not represented here; that its minister does not know French, is a morose fellow and impossible to deal with; that all difficulties would be removed if there were an envoy here to whom one could talk....Write to America in such a manner that the President will realize what an imbecile he has sent us.

{256} [On Castlereagh at the Congress of Vienna; conversation, 1816] I shall say nothing of the monstrous inconsistency of a minister who, representing the free nation par excellence, puts Italy back under the yoke, maintains Spain in subjection, and helps with all his might to forge chains for the entire Continent. Does he think by any chance that freedom is applicable only to the English and that the Continent is not to be free?

{257} [Conversation, 1816] In Fox the heart warmed the mind, while in Pitt genius desiccated the heart.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] Pitt, distinguished though he was by his gifts as a parliamentarian and by his knowledge of internal administration, was totally ignorant of what is called politics. Generally speaking, the English understand nothing of Continental politics, especially those of France.

[Conversation, 1816] What posterity will hold against Mr. Pitt more than anything else is the hideous school he has left behind him, its insolent Machiavellism, its profound immorality, its cold egoism, its contempt for human fate and objective justice.

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NATIONS AND PEOPLES

All these notions of national independence for a little island like Corsica! What difference does it make in the universal balance?

"FRANCE BEFORE EVERYTHING"

{258} [Letter, 1810] My axiom is: France before everything.

{259} [Letter, 1797, in answer to criticism that Napoleon failed to introduce the principles of the French Revolution in Italy] At no time has the French Republic adopted the principle of waging war for the sake of other nations. I should like to know what philosophical or moral principle demands the sacrifice of forty thousand Frenchmen against the clearly expressed will of the nation and the enlightened self-interest of the Republic.

I know full well that there is a handful of idle talkers—they might well be described as madmen—who want a universal republic. Their talk costs them nothing. I should like these gentlemen to come and take part in a winter campaign.

[Conversation with Rœderer, 1809, on King Joseph] This is another thing I reproach him with: he has become a Spaniard....The king must be French; Spain must be French. It is for France I have conquered Spain—conquered her with French blood, French limbs, French gold. I am wholly French by attachment as well as by duty. I do nothing except from duty and from love of France. I have dethroned the [Spanish] Bourbons only because it was in the interest *of* France to insure the future of my dynasty. I had no other aim but the glory and the power of France. My whole family must be French. When, last winter, in Mantua, Lucien dared speak to me as to a

foreigner, I said to him, “Go away, you wretch, out of my sight! All is finished between us!” (Here the Emperor raised his voice and spoke these last words with extraordinary force and emphasis.) I have conquered Spain; I have conquered her so that she may be French.

ON CORSICAN INDEPENDENCE

{260} [Manuscript, 1786] The Corsicans have been able, in accordance with every principle of justice, to shake off the Genoese yoke, and they are able to shake off the French yoke likewise. Amen.

[Letter to the Directory, 1797] In order to tie Corsica irrevocably to the Republic, the following must be done: (1) the island must always be divided into two departments; (2) not a single Corsican must be employed in a government position; (3) about fifty children should be selected and distributed among the various educational institutions of Paris. This last method, which is very inexpensive, must be regarded as essential....[In Paris, the children] will receive a better education than at home, and, above all, they will be taught to love France to the exclusion of all else.

[Conversation, 1817] I am more at home in Champagne than in Corsica, for I have been brought up at Brienne from the age of nine. The French wouldn’t have liked it at all if I had surrounded myself with Corsicans. On the contrary, I wanted to be absolutely French—although Corsica, situated as it is between France and Italy, might well be the fatherland of the man who was to rule both. Nevertheless, of all the insults that have been heaped upon me in so many pamphlets, the one to which I was most sensitive was that of being called “the Corsican.”

ON THE ITALIANS

{261} [Letter to the Directory, December 28, 1796] The Cispadane

republics [i.e., roughly, Lombardy] are divided into three parties: (1) the partisans of the old regime; (2) the partisans of an independent but somewhat aristocratic constitution; (3) the partisans of the French constitution or of pure democracy. I repress the first, I support the second, and I moderate the third.

I support the second party and moderate the third because the second party is that of the rich property owners and of the priests, and in the last analysis these are the men who are able to win over the mass of the people, which must be made to rally to the pro-French camp.

The third party consists of young people, writers, and the sort of men who, as in France and everywhere else, change their form of government and love liberty solely for the sake of making a revolution.

[Letter to the provisional government of Lombardy, April 12, 1797] You ask for guarantees of your future independence. But do you not find these guarantees in the daily victories of the Army of Italy? Each of our victories is another line of your constitutional charter. Deeds take the place of a declaration which by itself would be childish. You cannot doubt that the [French] government takes an interest in you and strongly desires your freedom and independence.

[Letter to the Directory, August 16, 1797] The islands of Corfu, Zante, and Cephalonia are more valuable to us than all of Italy put together. I believe that if we were obliged to choose, it would be preferable to restore Italy to Austria and to keep these islands.

[Letter to Talleyrand, October 7, 1797] You do not know the Italian people. They are not worth the lives of forty thousand Frenchmen....Since I came to Italy, I have received no help from this nation’s love of liberty and equality, or at least such help has been negligible. But the good discipline of

our troops; the great respect all of us displayed toward religion, to the point of cajoling its ministers; our righteous conduct; and, especially, our energy and readiness in curbing those who are ill-disposed toward us and in punishing our active enemies—these were the real allies of the Army of Italy. Here are the facts; whatever is good to say in proclamations and printed speeches is romantic fiction.

[Letter, October 26, 1797] Torn between as many interests as there are cities, effeminate and corrupt, as cowardly as it is hypocritical, the Italian people—and especially the people of Venice—is ill-suited for freedom.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] All the successive organizations of Italy were temporary. Napoleon's project was to constitute that great peninsula into a single power.

ON THE GERMANS

{262} [Letter to the Directory, 1797] If the Holy Roman Empire did not exist, it ought to be created for our special convenience.

After the Peace of Lunéville (1801), however, Napoleon presided over the liquidation of the Holy Roman Empire. The ecclesiastic fiefs and many of the smaller secular principalities were abolished and incorporated into the larger states, notably Bavaria, Württemberg, and Baden. On this policy Napoleon wrote the following to Talleyrand in 1802.

By this means the German Empire will be effectively divided into two empires, since German affairs would be managed from two different centers [Vienna and Berlin], On the supposition that these arrangements were accomplished, would Germany still have a common constitution? Yes and no. Yes, because it would not have been destroyed; no, because German affairs would not be administered as a single unit and because the

opposition of interests between Berlin and Vienna would be greater than ever.

[Letter to Louis, king of Holland, 1810] It was my intention to use the throne of Holland as a foundation on which I would have placed Hamburg, Osnabrück, and part of northern Germany. This would have formed a nucleus which would have uprooted the German national spirit still more thoroughly, and this is the chief aim of my policy.

{263} [Letter to Davout, 1811] The Germans...complain because you said at Rostock that you will prevent Germany from becoming another Spain and that, as long as you are in command there, no one will dare lift his hand against France. Such utterances do real harm. There is nothing in common between Spain and the German provinces....Judge for yourself if we have anything to fear from a nation as sensible, as reasonable, as dispassionate, as tolerant as the Germans, a nation so far removed from any form of excess that not one of our men has been murdered in Germany during the war.

In 181 3 the Germans surprised the world and themselves by proving that they were not altogether as peaceful as had been generally supposed. Napoleon’s defeat in Russia encouraged the German nationalists, whom he had thus far ignored, to force their princes to align themselves against France. Napoleon’s analysis of the situation proved prophetic.

[Letter to the king of Württemberg, January 18, 1813] The instigators of these troubles...are also the enemies of all the confederate princes; their hatred allows no exception for any of them. To create what they call a united Germany is their aim, and they want to attain it through anarchy and revolutions which, after devastating the various states, would leave them all at the mercy of the strongest.

“NATURAL BOUNDARIES”

{264} [Dictation, Saint Helena] The military might of France has always been tricked by the petty princes of Germany. It would have been more advantageous for France if, apart from Austria and Prussia, Germany had been divided into three other monarchies powerful enough to defend their territory, to have their neutrality respected, and to contain the ambitions of Austria, Prussia, and even France; for that power [France], which we assume to have its frontiers on the Rhine and the Alps, has no interests outside Italy. If the Italian peninsula were monarchic, it would be best for the welfare of Europe if it formed a single monarchy, which would hold the balance between Austria and France and, on the seas, between France and England. Europe will not be at peace until things are thus—natural boundaries.

ON THE SPANISH

{265} [Letter, 1808] The Spanish people is vile and cowardly, about the same as I found the Arabs to be.

[Conversation, December 1812] The heroism with which the Spanish nation is credited these days, in order to disparage the French, may be ascribed solely to the barbarous condition of that half-savage people and to its superstition, which the mistakes of our generals have fanned still further. It is because of his laziness, not from heroism, that the Spanish peasant prefers the dangers of smuggling and highway robbery to the toil of the farmer. The Spanish peasants have taken advantage of the situation in order to lead the nomadic life of smugglers, which is altogether to their taste and which serves the needs of their misery. There is nothing patriotic in this....The Spanish peasants are still further from civilization than the Russians.

[Dictation, c. 1816; first published in English] Napoleon says that the Spanish nation will deplore for a length of time that the constitution of Bayonne was not successful; that had it been so, they would have had no monks, no ecclesiastical jurisdiction, no archbishops enjoying millions of income, no privileged nunneries, no provincial customs houses, no badly administered and uncultivated national domains; they would have had a contented secular clergy and nobles without feudal privileges and exemptions from taxes; that they would have been a regenerated people; that the change they would have experienced would have been more beneficial to them than the discovery of another Peru. “Instead of this,” said he, “what have they got? A set of grossly ignorant monks, superstitious and rich! Nobles grasping everything! A people oppressed by the Inquisition and brutalized by ignorance and feudal tyranny!”

ON POLISH INDEPENDENCE

{266} [Letter to Fouché, 1800] Citizen Minister, the First Consul wishes you to order the immediate seizure of all the copies of a brochure entitled “No Solid or Durable Peace without the Restoration of Poland.”

[Reply to a Polish deputation, Berlin, 1806] It is in the interests of Europe, it is in the interest of France that Poland should exist.

[Official communiqué of Napoleon’s reply to various Polish deputations, Poznan, 1806] The Emperor replied to each of the speakers. Among other things, His Majesty said:

That France had never recognized the partition of Poland; that warlike events having brought him into this country, he considered it consonant with his principles to receive representatives of that ancient kingdom; that the illustrious Polish nation had rendered the greatest services to all of Europe; that her misfortunes had been brought about by her inner divisions;

that he could not promise them the restoration of their independence, since that could be accomplished by none but themselves; that when a great nation of several million men wants its independence, it always is bound to succeed in its enterprise; that, as Emperor of the French, he will always view with the greatest interest the restoration of the Polish throne, for the independence of that great nation would guarantee that of her neighbors, threatened by the boundless ambition of Russia; that this depends on them more than on him; that if the clergy, the nobles, and the burghers wanted to unite for the common cause and were firmly resolved to conquer or to die, he could predict their victory, but that speeches and empty wishes are not enough; that what force has overthrown only force can restore; that what has been destroyed for lack of unity only unity can re-establish; and that, since the same principle that caused France to refuse recognition of the partition also caused her to desire the restoration of Poland, the Poles could always count on his all-powerful protection.

[Instructions to General Bertrand, Eylau, February 13, 1807; Bertrand was trying to negotiate an armistice with Prussia] He [Bertrand] will let it be understood that, as far as Poland is concerned, since the Emperor has come to know that country he no longer attaches the least value to it.

[Note on a draft of the annual message on the state of the Empire, May 1807] Do not mention Polish independence and suppress everything tending to show the Emperor as the liberator of Poland, seeing that he never has explained himself on that subject.

[Letter, 1810] Poland exists only in the imagination of those who want to use it as a pretext for spinning dreams.

[Letter, 1811] I am far from wanting to be the Don Quixote of Poland.

[At a meeting of the council of ministers, 1812, discussing plans against

Russia] It has always seemed to me that the restoration of Poland is desirable for all the Western powers. So long as that kingdom is not reconstituted, Europe lacks frontiers in the direction of Asia, and Austria and Prussia will be face to face with the most powerful empire on earth. In this I consider only the interests of all and am prompted by no personal gain: I have no pretensions to the Polish throne either for myself or for my family. Let Poland be reborn independent and free; I shall be content with the honor of having been the instrument.

However, the undertaking is of too remote an interest for France to embark on it adventurously. I even believe that the restoration of Poland could not form the motive for a war, though it may result from one.

At this moment, events seem to be sweeping us along, and it is not without regret that I shall find myself compelled to anticipate by several years the realization of designs which I had relegated to the future. A break with Russia may bring many risks; we must foresee the possibilities and not deprive ourselves of the faculty of yielding if resistance should become too strong. Thus, we must not listen to an ill-considered zeal for the Polish cause. France first—that is my policy.

Shortly afterward, the die was cast: Napoleon invaded Russia and had the independence of Poland and Lithuania proclaimed. However, his grandiose projects for a general uprising against Russia soon flickered out, and he ended up by blaming the Poles for a large share in his defeat.

ON FREEDOM FOR THE NEGROES

{267} [Proclamation to the citizens of Santo Domingo, 1799] In announcing to you the new social compact [i.e., the creation of the Consulate in France], the Consuls of the Republic declare to you that these sacred principles, the liberty and equality of the blacks, shall remain forever

inviolate and immutable in your country.

If there are men in the colony of Santo Domingo who bear us ill will, if there are any who remain in communication with the enemy, remember, brave Negroes, that France alone recognizes your liberty and your equal rights.

The Haitians wanted independence, and Napoleon's tune soon changed, "the interest of civilization making it necessary to destroy the new Algiers which was forming in the middle of America" (letter to Talleyrand, October 30, 1801, *Correspondence*, VII, 308).

[Proclamation, November 8, 1801] Inhabitants of Santo Domingo! Regardless of your origin and color, you are all Frenchmen. All of you are free and equal before God and the Republic.

Like Santo Domingo, France has been the prey of factions and torn by civil and by foreign war. But all this has changed. All the nations have embraced the French and sworn peace and friendship. All the French have embraced one another, too, and have sworn to be friends and brothers. You, too, come and embrace the French and rejoice to see your friends and European brothers again.

The Government sends you the captain-general [i.e., governor] Leclerc. He is taking large forces with him to protect you from your enemies and the enemies of the Republic. If it be said to you: "These forces are sent to rob you of your freedom," answer: "The Republic has given us our freedom, the Republic will not allow our freedom to be taken away."

Rally to the captain-general. He is bringing you abundance and peace. Rally to him. Whoever dares separate himself from the captain-general's cause is a traitor to his country, and the wrath of the Republic shall devour

him as fire devours your cane fields in a drought.

[Notes for a draft decree, April 27, 1802] It seems to me that, with respect to the regulations concerning the blacks, the colonies must be divided into two classes: those where the laws emancipating the blacks have been published and more or less carried out [e.g., Haiti] and those where the old order has been preserved [e.g., Martinique]. For the former, I want to propose Regulation No. I; for the latter, Regulation No. II.

I

The Consuls of the Republic, having heard the opinion of the Conseil d'état, decree as follows:

Article l.—On the basis of reports submitted to the captain-general of the colony of [blank] by the persons designated by him to that effect, a list shall be drawn up comprising (1) the names of those black individuals who were free before 26 Pluviôse, Year II, and (2) the names of those black individuals who have helped defend the territory of the Republic against its enemies or who have rendered service to the State in any other way.

Article 2.—All the individuals on that list shall be declared free.

Article 3.—Those among them who own no property and are unskilled in a trade or profession that could ensure their livelihood will be subjected to police regulations which will assign them to landed proprietors as agricultural laborers; the regulations shall fix their wages and prescribe what measures are to be taken to prevent vagrancy and insubordination.{268}

Article 4.—Insubordinate individuals and inveterate vagrants shall, according to the provisions of those regulations, be struck from the list and deprived of the corresponding privileges.

Article 5.—All individuals whose names do not appear on the list

mentioned in Article I shall be subject to the laws and regulations which in 1789 constituted the Black Code of the colonies.

Article 6.—It shall be lawful to import black slaves into the colony of [blank] under the laws and regulations on slave trade which were in force in 1789.

The minister of marine is made responsible for the execution of the present decree.

II

The Consuls of the Republic, having heard the opinion of the Conseil d'état, decree as follows:

Article 1.—The laws and regulations to which the blacks were subject in 1789 shall remain in force in the colony of [blank].

Article 2.—It shall be lawful to import black slaves under the long-established laws and regulations on that matter.

The minister of marine is made responsible for the execution of the present decree.

[Letter to General Leclerc, July 1, 1802] The moment the blacks are disarmed and their principal generals deported to France, you will have accomplished more for the commerce and civilization of Europe than has been done in the most brilliant campaigns.

{269} [Conseil d'état, 1803] I am for the whites, because I am white. I have no other reason, and it is a good reason. How could they grant freedom to Africans, to utterly uncivilized men who did not even know what a colony was, what France was? It is obvious that those who wanted freedom for the blacks wanted the whites to become slaves.

[Conversation, 1817] The Santo Domingo affair was a very foolish business on my part. If it had succeeded, it would have done no good except that it would have made the Noailles and La Rochefoucaulds still richer. I believe that Josephine, being born in Martinique, had some influence on that expedition—not directly, but a woman who sleeps with her husband always exerts some influence over him. It was the greatest mistake I ever made in my administration. I should have treated with the black leaders as with provincial authorities, appointed Negro officers in all the black regiments, kept Toussaint L'Ouverture as viceroy, sent no troops, and left everything to the blacks, except for giving them a few white advisers, a treasurer for instance—and even these I would have wanted to marry black women. That way, seeing that they were not surrounded by the threat of white power, the Negroes would have come to trust my policy.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] The question of freeing the blacks is a very complex and difficult problem. In Africa and Asia it has been solved, but only by the means of polygamy. There a single family has both white and Negro members. Since the head of the family has white, black, and mulatto wives, his white and mulatto offspring are brothers, are brought up in the same cradle, bear the same family name, and share the same table. Should it prove impossible, then, to authorize polygamy in our colonies, limiting the legal number of wives to two, one white, one black?

"HIS MAJESTY LOVES THE AMERICANS"

{270} [Instructions for the French minister in Washington, 1802, after the American government had protested against French conduct in Santo Domingo] As far as misconduct in colonies is concerned, it would be difficult for the French to compete with the Americans.

[Message on the state of the Republic, 1804; on the sale of Louisiana]

The United States owe their independence to France; henceforth they will also owe us their consolidation and greatness.

[Draft note, 1810, to be sent by the foreign minister] His Majesty loves the Americans; he regards their prosperity and commerce as favorable to his policies. The independence of America is one of the chief glories of France. Since then, it has been His Majesty's pleasure to enlarge the United States. In all circumstances, the Emperor will always regard everything that is capable of increasing the prosperity and of guaranteeing the welfare of that country as linked to his interests and to his most cherished desires.

[Conversation, 1817] The Americans are mere merchants and put all their glory into making money.

With the sale of Louisiana, Napoleon renounced all colonial ambitions in the Americas. Thus, after taking over Spain, he made no attempt to gain control of the Spanish colonies but sought to encourage their independence under the aegis of the United States in order to detach them from British influence. (For new colonies, his eyes were on North Africa.) The following instructions for Sérurier, the French minister in Washington, are contained in a letter to the foreign minister, 1811.

{271} Give him [Sérurier] to understand that I mean to encourage the independence of all the Americas; that he must explain himself in this sense not only to the President [Madison] but also to the representatives or agents whom the various colonies may have in the United States; that he must try to win their friendship; that he is authorized even to send agents to these colonies; that we shall be glad to send them arms and whatever help we may give, provided that the independence of these colonies be pure and simple and that they enter into no separate agreements with England.

“WAR TO THE DEATH WITH ENGLAND!”

{272} [Conversation, 1798] If my voice has any influence, England will never have an hour’s respite from us. Yes, yes! War to the death with England! Always—until she is destroyed!

[Letter to George III, January 2, 1805] In the past ten years Your Majesty has gained more territories and riches than all of Europe is worth. Your people has reached the peak of its prosperity....If Your Majesty would only stop to think of it, you will see that this war has no aim and there is nothing Your Majesty can expect to gain from it. Ah, what a sad prospect it is to make men kill one another for the sake of killing! The world is large enough for our two great nations to live side by side, and reason is powerful enough to show by what means all differences can be reconciled, if only both sides are willing.

{273}[Conversation, 1816] In my scheme, England was in nature bound to become a mere appendix of France. Nature has made her one of our islands, just like Oléron or Corsica.

[Conversation, 1816] I had left open the possibility of a landing [in England]; I had the best army that ever was—the army that was to win at Austerlitz, and with that I have said everything. Four days were enough to reach London. I would not have entered as conqueror but as liberator, a new William of Orange—but more generous and disinterested. The discipline in my army would have been exemplary; it would have behaved in London as if still in Paris. No sacrifices, not even war taxes would have been exacted from the English. We would have appeared to them not as victors but as brothers who had come to restore them to their freedom and their rights. I would have told them to form an assembly and to effect their regeneration by their own efforts; that in political legislation they were our seniors; that

we wanted nothing from them except to rejoice in their happiness and prosperity—and I would have been scrupulously faithful to my words. And thus, before a few months had passed, these two nations, these ruthless enemies, would have become united by identical principles, policies, and interests.

From there I would have proceeded to regenerate Europe from the south to the north, under the colors of republicanism—for I was First Consul then—just as I nearly succeeded in doing later, from the north to the south, under monarchic forms. Both these systems could have served equally well, for they tended toward the same end, and both would have been put into operation with firmness, moderation, and good faith. How many known evils, how many evils as yet unknown this poor Europe of ours would have been spared! There never was a vaster project conceived in the interests of civilization with more generous intent or one that came closer to its realization. And here is the remarkable thing: the obstacles that made me fail did not come from men; they all came from the elements. In the south, the sea has been my undoing; in the north, the burning of Moscow and the cold of winter. Thus water, air, and fire, all of Nature, nothing but Nature—these have been the enemies of a universal regeneration which Nature herself demanded! The problems of Providence are insoluble.

[Conversation, 1816] England and France have held the fate of the earth, and especially of European civilization, in their hands. How much evil we have inflicted on each other! How much good we might have done!

ENGLAND: SOCIAL CRITICISM

{274} [Conseil d'état, 1806] It is ridiculous to hear the English spirit of toleration praised by so many philosophers, when in fact the English nation is the only one that does not recognize the principles of toleration and when

the English government prefers to keep an army of sixty thousand men in Ireland rather than allow that island to enjoy its most legitimate rights.

[Conversation, 1817, reported in English] You were greatly offended with me for having called you a nation of shopkeepers. Had I meant by this that you were a nation of cowards, you would have had reason to be displeased, even though it were ridiculous and contrary to historical facts; but no such thing was ever intended. I meant that you were a nation of merchants, and that all your great riches and your grand resources arose from commerce, which is true. What else constitutes the riches of England? It is not extent of territory or a numerous population. It is not mines of gold, silver, or diamonds. Moreover, no man of sense ought to be ashamed of being called a shopkeeper. But your prince and your ministers appear to wish to change altogether the *esprit* of the English and to make you into a different nation; to make you ashamed of your shops and your trade, which have made you what you are, and to sigh after nobility, titles, and decorations....Stick to your ships, your commerce, and your counting-houses, and leave ribbons, decorations, and cavalry uniforms to the Continent, and you will prosper.

[Conversation, 1816, reported in English by O'Meara] Napoleon professed himself doubtful that the English could now continue to manufacture goods so as to be able to sell them at the same price as those made in France, in consequence of the actual necessaries of life being so much dearer in England than in France...."Your great commerce has kept you up; but that will fail when you will no longer be able to undersell the manufacturers of other nations, who are rapidly improving. A few years will tell if I am right."

[Conversation, 1818, reported in English] There is not a populace in the

world, not even the Prussian, worse treated [than the English]. Excepting the obligation of serving as soldiers, the German rabble are better off than yours. You have no more regard for yours than if they were so many Helots, and you treat them precisely as if they were such. To my lords and my ladies, to the aristocracy and the *gentlemen*, oh, indeed, you pay every kind of attention and regard. Nothing can be too good for them; no treatment kind enough; but for your *canaille*—bah! they are so many dogs. As your contractors said when furnishing provisions to the French prisoners: “It is too good for those French dogs.” You yourself have got a great deal of aristocratic arrogance in your head and appear to look down upon your common people as if they were a race of inferior beings. You talk of your freedom. Can anything be more horrible than your pressing of seamen? You send your boats on shore to seize upon every male that can be found; if he has the misfortune of belonging to the *canaille*, if he cannot prove himself a gentleman, he is hurried on board your ships to serve as a seaman in all quarters of the globe. And yet you have the impudence to talk of the conscription in France: it wounds your pride, because it falls upon *all ranks*. Oh, how shocking that a gentleman’s son should be obliged to defend his country just as if he were one of the riffraff! And that he should be compelled to expose his body or put himself on a level with a vile plebeian! Yet God made all men alike. Who forms the nation? Not your lords, nor your fat prelates and churchmen, nor your gentlemen, nor your oligarchy. Oh, one day the people will avenge themselves, and terrible scenes will take place.

“THE RUSSIAN COLOSSUS”

{275} [Message on the state of the Republic, 1801] The peace with Russia has been signed, and nothing henceforth shall disturb the relations between two great nations that have so many reasons for friendship and none for

mutual fear, two nations which nature has placed at the two extremities of Europe in order to balance the north and the south.

[Instructions for the press, to Fouché, 1805] Have them say that the Russians are a nation of barbarians and that their strength lies in their cunning.

[Speech to the Legislative Body, 1809] My ally and friend, the emperor of Russia, has added Finland, Moldavia, Walachia, and a district of Galicia to his vast empire. I am not jealous of whatever advantages that empire may gain.

[Conversation, December 1812] From now on, Europe has only one enemy. That enemy is the Russian colossus.

The four brief quotations above, taken more or less at random from a vast body of similar utterances, epitomize the two poles of Napoleon's Russian policy. An impartial synthesis of the story of what lay behind has never been written and cannot be written so long as it retains its timeliness. Since little has been added over the past one hundred fifty years to Napoleon's anti-Russian propaganda arsenal, some of the following excerpts will seem familiar. The other excerpts shed a curious light on their good faith.

{276} [Bulletin, November 16, 1805] General Klein has led a raid into Bohemia with his division of dragoons. Everywhere he has seen the Russians abhorred. One shudders at their acts of devastation. The irruption of those barbarians, whom the [Austrian] government itself has called to its aid, has nearly extinguished all the love that the Austrian subjects felt for their ruler. "We and the French," say those Germans, "we are the children of the Romans. The Russians are the children of the Tartars. We prefer a thousand times such enemies as the French to such allies as the Russians."

In Vienna, the very name of the Russians brought terror. Those savage hordes are not content with pillaging to provide for their subsistence: they plunder, they demolish everything.

{277} [Letter to Alexander I, emperor of Russia, February 2, 1808] We cannot attain peace [with England] and consolidate our system except by means of great and vast enterprises. Your Majesty must increase and strengthen his army. Whatever support and assistance I may be able to give Your Majesty I shall give without hidden motives. I feel no jealousy toward Russia but only concern for her glory, her prosperity, her greatness. Will Your Majesty accept the advice of a person who professes sincere and loving devotion to him? Your Majesty needs to push the Swedes farther back from his capital. Your Majesty may increase his territory in that direction as far as he wishes; I am ready to help Your Majesty with all the means at my disposal.

An army of fifty thousand men—Russians, Frenchmen, and perhaps even Austrians—marching by way of Constantinople into Asia would have only to reach the Euphrates in order to make England tremble and bring her down on her knees before the Continent. I am ready in Dalmatia; Your Majesty is ready on the Danube. One month after we reach an agreement, the army could have reached the Bosporus. The blow would be felt in India, and England would submit....Everything could be signed before March 15. By May 1, our troops could be in Asia, and, at the same time, Your Majesty's troops could be in Stockholm....

Your Majesty and I would prefer the sweetness of peace...but the enemies of the world do not want it thus. We must be great despite ourselves. It is the part of wisdom and of politics to do what destiny ordains and to follow the lead of the irresistable march of events....In these few

lines I am expressing my whole mind to Your Majesty....Let us acknowledge that the epoch of great events and great changes has come.

Alexander showed little eagerness for the personal interview for which Napoleon was pressing. The following letter shows the first clouds.

[To Caulaincourt, French ambassador in St. Petersburg, May 31, 1808] It seems to me that you are not explaining my reasons sufficiently. I wanted the meeting in order to settle our affairs with Russia. The Russians did not want the interview, since they wanted to make conditions first, that is, unless I accepted all the propositions made by Count Romantsov. But it was precisely in order to negotiate these points that I wanted a meeting. I shall be available from June 20, but I want an interview without prior conditions. More than that: I want the Russians to acknowledge first that I do not adopt the bases proposed by Count Romantsov, which are too unfavorable to me. I told Emperor Alexander, “Reconcile the interests of the two empires.” Now, to reconcile the interests of the two empires can hardly mean that one of them should sacrifice its interests to the other and even endanger its independence. Besides, a clash would then become inevitable, for if Russia had an outlet on the Dardanelles, she would be at the gates of Toulon, Naples, and Corfu. Thus you must make it clear that Russia wants much too much and that France cannot agree to such an arrangement, that this is a difficult problem to solve, which is the very reason why I tried to come to an understanding at a conference. At bottom, the question is always this: Who shall have Constantinople?

At the same time, be it noted, Napoleon made protestations of eternal friendship to the emperor of Turkey, at whose ungrateful defection in 1812 he was as much incensed as at that of Sweden. The much-desired conference took place at Erfurt in 1808 and yielded no real results. Tension

between France and Russia increased over the years over various pretexts, and events took a course made familiar since then by monotonous repetition.

{278} [Letter to Marshal Davout, March 24, 1811] I do not want war with Russia, but I want to occupy offensive positions, and for that purpose I want to effect such troop movements as would cause war to break out if they took place at a later date. For it is obvious that if these movements took place at a time when the Russians have all their forces available, the Russians would no longer wish to believe my explanations and would march straight on Warsaw.

[Letter to the king of Württemberg, April 2, 1811] Like Your Majesty, I hope and I believe that Russia will not make war. However, since the end of last year she has built twenty field fortifications. At this instant she is forming fifteen new regiments; her divisions in Finland and in Siberia are on their march to the borders of the Grand Duchy [of Warsaw]; finally, four divisions of her army in Moldavia are also marching to the borders of the Grand Duchy. The intentions of governments are revealed not by words but by deeds.

{279} [Conversation, March 5, 1812] *Comte de Narbonne:* What I fear in Russia is her barbarity and her hugeness. I even fear, for the sake of your glory, a gigantic effort on her part.

Napoleon: I can’t understand you, my dear Narbonne—you, ordinarily so confident and cheerful!...Facts will dispel all these fears. Barbarian nations are superstitious and have simple ideas. A single blow delivered at the heart of the Russian empire, at Moscow the Great, Moscow the Holy, will in a single instant put this whole blind and apathetic mass at my mercy. I know Alexander. I once had influence over him; it will come back. His

imagination must be struck by some great, bold, powerful stroke, and he will come back to me. Perhaps he will yield at the sole sight of the unprecedented armaments I am building up....If not—well, let destiny be accomplished and let Russia be crushed under my hatred of England! Her barbarity, which frightens you, makes her inferior to our tactical and organizational genius. And as for her hugeness, it merely means that many more victorious marches. At the head of four hundred thousand men, their arrears all paid, with a baggage train and supplies established on an unprecedented scale, with reserves covering our flanks, with a Lithuanian auxiliary corps, whose blood is the same as that of a part of the population through whose country we shall march, I do not fear that long road which is bordered by deserts and at whose end are victory and peace.

(With a sudden flash in his eyes, the Emperor then raised his voice as if in a trancelike exaltation:) After all, that long road is the road to India. Alexander the Great, to reach the Ganges, started from just as distant a point as Moscow. I have said this to myself ever since Acre.{280}

{281} [Proclamation to the Grand Army, June 22, 1812] Soldiers! The second Polish war has begun. The first ended at Friedland and Tilsit. At Tilsit, Russia swore eternal alliance with France and war on England. Today, she breaks her oaths! She refuses to give any explanation for her strange conduct unless the French eagles retire beyond the Rhine, thus leaving our allies at her mercy.

Russia is swept along by her fate! Let her destiny be accomplished. Have we degenerated? Are we no longer the soldiers of Austerlitz? Russia gives us the choice between dishonor and war. Our choice cannot be in doubt. Let us march forward, then! Let us cross the Niemen, let us carry the war into her territory! The second Polish war shall bring glory to the armies of

France, as did the first. But the peace we shall make will contain its own guarantee and put an end to that fatal influence which Russia has exerted for fifty years on the affairs of Europe.

[Remark made at the battle of Borodino] Those Russians let themselves be killed like machines....They are citadels that have to be demolished with cannon.

[Proclamation to the Grand Army, Lützen, May 3, 1813] In the past campaign, the Russians found no defense against our armies except in the ferocious methods practiced by their barbaric ancestors: armies of Tartars burned the fields and cities, and Holy Moscow herself!

Today they come into our homes, preceded by all the scum and deserters of Germany, France, and Italy, in order to preach revolt, anarchy, civil war, and murder. They have become the apostles of every crime. They want to set off a moral conflagration from the Vistula to the Rhine so that they may, according to the custom of despotic governments, put a desert between themselves and us. The madmen! Little do they know the Germans and their loyalty to their sovereigns, their prudence, their love of order, their good sense! How little they know the power and the courage of the French!...We shall throw these Tartars back into the atrocious climes which they must never leave. Let them stay in their icy deserts, the home of slavery, barbarity, and corruption, where man is lowered to the level of the beasts. European civilization owes you a debt. Soldiers! Italy, France, and Germany offer you their gratitude!

There is a curious footnote to Napoleon’s indignation over the slavery of the Russian people: he considered, while in Russia, freeing the serfs and organizing a peasant uprising—but in the last moment he decided against this measure. In identical letters to the German sovereigns, his allies, he

explained his decision as follows.

[January 18, 1813] In a country where the middle class is so small, and at a time when that class (without whose help it would have been impossible to direct or to contain within just bounds a mass movement once it was started) had fled in terror from ruined Moscow, I felt that to arm a population of slaves would have condemned the country to frightful sufferings. I would not even think of it.

{282} [Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] The Emperor spoke at length about Asia—the political position of Russia; the ease with which she might undertake an operation directed at India or even China; the uneasiness this must cause in England; how many troops Russia would require; the point of departure and the route of the troops; the mineral wealth Russia would gain; etc....

From there the Emperor passed to what he called the admirable position of Russia over against the rest of Europe and to the immense mass of Russia's invasion potential. He described that empire as seated beneath the North Pole, resting its back against masses of eternal ice which, when necessary, made it inaccessible. Russia could be attacked, he said, only during three or four months of the year, while she disposed of the full year against us. Those who attack her find only a wilderness, a landscape either dead or numb, hardship, suffering, and privations—while her own peoples are eager to rush toward the delights of the south.

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In the new political organization of Europe, the Emperor said, the fate of that part of the world [Russia] depended on the abilities and intentions of a single man. "If Russia gets an emperor who is bold, impetuous, capable, in a word a tsar who has some hair on his chest"—the Emperor used a much

more energetic expression—”then Europe is his....What is certain is that I, given this situation, would reach Calais according to a fixed timetable, and once there I would be the master and arbiter of Europe.” After a few moments’ silence, he added: “Perhaps, my dear Las Cases, you feel tempted to ask me, as the minister of Pyrrhus asked his master, ‘And after all that, what is the good of it?’ I answer: to found a new society and to avert great misfortunes. Europe is waiting and praying for such a good deed. The old order is finished, the new order is not yet firmly established, nor will it be established without protracted and furious convulsions.”

The Emperor again fell silent, measuring distances on the map with his calipers and asserting that Constantinople was by its situation the center and seat of universal domination, etc.

[Conversation, 1817, reported in English] Once mistress of Constantinople, Russia gets all the commerce of the Mediterranean, becomes a great naval power, and God knows what may happen. She quarrels with you [England], marches off to India with an army of seventy thousand good soldiers, which to Russia is nothing, and a hundred thousand assorted riffraff, Cossacks and so forth—and England loses India. Of all the powers, Russia is most to be feared, especially by you....All this I foresaw. I see farther into the future than others, and I wanted to establish a barrier against those barbarians by restoring the kingdom of Poland and putting Poniatowski at its head as king; but your half-witted ministers would not consent. A hundred years from now I shall be praised to the skies, and Europe, especially England, will lament my failure. When they see the finest countries of Europe overrun, a prey to those barbarians of the north, they will say: “Napoleon was right.”

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THE ART OF WAR

War...an immense art which comprises all others...

The military are a freemasonry...and I am the grand master of their lodges.

A SYMBOL OF WAR

{283} [Dictation, Saint Helena] Achilles was the son of a goddess and a mortal: he symbolizes the genius of war. Its divine half is composed of all those elements which depend on moral factors—on character, on talent, on the interests of your adversary, on public opinion, and on the morale of your troops, who are either strong and victorious or weak and beaten, depending on which they think they will be. Armaments, entrenchments, positions, order of battle, everything pertaining to the combinations of material factors —these make up the earthly half.

THE SPECTACLE OF WAR

{284} [Dictation, Saint Helena] A battle is a dramatic action which has its beginning, its middle, and its end. The battle order of the opposing armies and their preliminary maneuvers until they come to grips form the exposition. The countermaneuvers of the army which has been attacked constitute the dramatic complication. They lead in turn to new measures and bring about the crisis, and from this results the outcome or denouement.

{285} [Letter to General Dugua, July 26, 1799] Yesterday at 7 A.M. we met the enemy [an Anglo-Turkish landing force], who had taken position at a league’s distance from the fort at Aboukir [Egypt], We attacked and routed him. We took all his redoubts, his entrenchments, and his camp, and we drowned twelve thousand men in the sea.

[Letter to General Dugua, July 27, 1799] This was one of the most beautiful battles I ever saw. Not one man of the landing forces escaped.

[Letter to the Directory, July 28, 1799] The enemy forces threw themselves into the sea, hoping to reach the boats about three quarters of a league offshore. They all drowned. It was the most terrible sight I ever saw.

{286} [Bulletin, March 2, 1807] After the battle of Eylau, the Emperor spent several hours daily on the battlefield....To visualize the scene one must imagine, within the space of one square league, nine or ten thousand corpses; four or five thousand dead horses; rows upon rows of Russian field packs; the remnants of guns and swords; the ground covered with cannon balls, shells, and other ammunition; and twenty-four artillery pieces, near which could be seen the corpses of the drivers who were killed while trying to move them—all this sharply outlined on a background of snow. A sight such as this should inspire rulers with the love of peace and the hatred of war.

{287} [Letter to Josephine, from the Channel coast, 1804] The wind grew very strong last night, and one of our gunboats lost its moorings in the roads and was driven against some rocks a league away from Boulogne. I thought that ship and crew were lost, but we succeeded in saving everything. It was a grand spectacle: the guns firing to give the alarm, the shore lit up by signal fires, the raging and roaring sea, the whole night spent in the anxiety of saving those poor devils or of seeing them perish. The soul was suspended between eternity, the ocean, and the night. At five in the morning the weather cleared, all had been rescued, and I went to sleep with the sensation of having had a romantic and epic dream.

[Conversation, night of August 17, 1812] *Napoleon (watching Smolensk burn*): It’s like Vesuvius erupting! Don’t you think this is a beautiful sight,

Mr. Grand Equerry?

Caulaincourt: Horrible, Sire.

Napoleon: Bah! Remember, gentlemen, what a Roman emperor said: “The corpse of an enemy always smells sweet.”

[Conversation, 1816, reported in English, on the burning of Moscow] It was the spectacle of a sea and billows of fire, a sky and clouds of flame—mountains of red rolling flames, like immense waves of the sea, alternately bursting forth and lifting themselves to skies of fire, and then sinking into the ocean of flame below. Oh, it was the most grand, the most sublime, and the most terrifying sight the world ever beheld!

{288}[Conversation, December 1815, reported by Las Cases] Napoleon told how, after one of the great battles of the Italian campaign [of 1796-97], he and two or three others crossed the battlefield, which had not yet been cleared of corpses. “We were alone, in the profound solitude of a beautiful moonlit night. Suddenly a dog leaped out from under the cloak of a corpse, came running toward us, and almost immediately afterward ran back to its shelter, howling piteously. He licked his master’s face, ran back to us, and repeated this several times: he was seeking help and revenge at the same time. I don’t know whether it was the mood of the moment, or the place, or the time, or the action in itself, or what—at any rate, it’s a fact that nothing I saw on any other battlefield ever produced a like impression on me. I stopped involuntarily to contemplate this spectacle. This man, I said to myself, has friends, perhaps. He may have some at the camp, in his company—and here he lies, abandoned by all except his dog. What a lesson nature was teaching us through an animal!

“What a strange thing is man! How mysterious are the workings of his sensibility! I had commanded in battles that were to decide the fate of a

whole army, and I had felt no emotion. I had watched the execution of maneuvers that were bound to cost the lives of many among us, and my eyes had remained dry. And suddenly I was shaken, turned inside out, by a dog howling in pain!”

“NOBODY LOVES PEACE MORE THAN I DO”

{289} [Letter to the queen of Naples, 1805] Is it really so difficult to remain quiet, to avoid giving offense to the powers, and to refrain from ruining your subjects for the sake of laboriously picking up a grain of sand and trying to tip the scales of the world with it?

[Letter to the king of Prussia, 1806] I must say this to Your Majesty: war shall never be of my doing, for if it were, I should look upon myself as a criminal. Criminal is what I call a sovereign who, for a whim, undertakes a war which the policy of his country does not justify.

{290} [Letter to Joseph, 1805] You do not get peace by shouting “Peace!”...Peace is a meaningless word; what we need is a glorious peace.

[Letter to Cambacérès, 1813] I am not a fire-eater. I do not make a profession out of war. Nobody loves peace more than I do, but my deliberations in this matter shall be guided solely by my desire for a solemn, durable peace and by the general situation of my Empire.

[Conversation, 1813] What my enemies call a general peace is my destruction. What I call peace is merely the disarmament of my enemies. Am I not more moderate than they?

[Conversation, April 11, 1814, on abdicating rather than making peace on the Allies’ terms] I abdicate and I yield nothing.

HOW WAR BECOMES INEVITABLE

In 1808, Napoleon gave instructions, in a letter, for the French ambassador in Vienna to address the Austrian government in the following terms.

{291} “You say you have four hundred thousand men under arms, which is more than your monarchy ever had. You want to double their number: we shall follow your example. Soon even the women will have to be conscripted. When things come to this point, when all the springs are thus strained, war becomes desirable in order to bring about a release. Thus, in the physical world, at the approach of a storm, nature is in a state of tension so painful that the outbreak of the storm is desirable because it relaxes the exacerbated nerves and restores heaven and earth to peaceful serenity. An acute but short pain is preferable to prolonged suffering.”

[Letter to the king of Württemberg, 1811] Your Majesty’s family ties with Russia signify nothing. The intentions of Emperor Alexander’s court mean just as little. Among great nations, facts alone speak; the trend of public opinion determines the events....If the emperor wants war, the trend of public opinion agrees with his intentions; if he does not want war and does not promptly halt that impetus, he will be dragged into it against his will next year. Thus war will come despite me, despite him, despite the interests of France and of Russia. I have seen this happen so often that my experience of the past reveals these future events to me....Your Majesty could not possibly suppose that I want war. Why should I?

“WAR JUSTIFIES EVERYTHING”

{292} [Letter to General Hédouville, 1799] If you wage war, do it energetically and with severity. This is the only way to make it shorter, and consequently less inhuman.

[Letter to Berthier, 1808] War justifies everything.

{293} [Conversation with General Mack, commander of the surrendered Austrian forces at Ulm, October 19, 1805] *Napoleon:* How could you be so stubborn as to hold out in this miserable fortress of Ulm, which doesn't even deserve to be called a fortress? It is indefensible, and you wanted to resist my whole army. For my forces are vastly superior in numbers. Together with the Bavarian army, they amount to more than two hundred ten thousand men.

Mack: I beg Your Majesty's pardon. You have only one hundred forty thousand men, and that is almost twice the number I could pit against you.

Napoleon: Now let us add it up together: I have one hundred seventy battalions here, each of a thousand men, with a cavalry of more than twenty thousand men; my Guards, eight thousand; and twenty thousand Bavarians.

Mack: Your Majesty's battalions have only five or six hundred men each, and your forces cannot amount to more than one hundred forty thousand men at the most.

Napoleon: How do you know the strength of my battalions?

Mack: Precisely the same way Your Majesty knows the strength of ours: I had them counted when they passed the Rhine.

Napoleon: Well, I'll admit they have only six hundred men, which is their peacetime strength. But the others will arrive here presently, and my Army of Brest, under Marshal Augereau, will join the Grand Army.

Mack: It is said that Your Majesty has troops marching through Switzerland, whose neutrality we have respected.

Napoleon: I have not recognized its neutrality; consequently, I have a

right to enter its territory.

Mack: Ah! We are always the dupes of our good faith, of our credulity! It's a very sad, a very unfortunate thing! And in the same way Your Majesty has violated the neutrality of Prussia, thus gaining eight days in effecting the junction of your forces with Bernadotte's army and the Bavarian army. This premature junction gave you the opportunity to crush us—and yet, if I had wished to violate Prussian territory, I could easily have cut off the Bavarians' retreat.

Napoleon (*smiling*): Why didn't you do it?

{294} [Conversation, c. 1810, on Wellington's retreat to Portugal] There's a man for you! He is forced to flee from an army that he dares not fight, but he puts eighty leagues of devastation between himself and his pursuers. He slows down the march of the pursuing army, he weakens it by all kinds of privation—he knows how to ruin it without fighting it. In all of Europe, only Wellington and I are capable of carrying out such measures. But there is this difference between him and myself: in France...I would be criticized, whereas England will praise him.

[Same conversation] A great deal has been said about the burning of the Palatinate, and our miserable historians still slander Louis XIV on that subject. The glory of that deed does not belong to Louis; it belongs entirely to his minister, Louvois, and it is, in my eyes, the finest action of his life.

{295} [Letter to Alexander I, September 20, 1812, on the burning of Moscow] This conduct is atrocious and has no aim. What is its object? To deprive us of some supplies? But these were stored in cellars which the fire could not reach. Besides, how is it possible to destroy one of the most beautiful cities in the world and the labors of centuries for so small an aim? But this is the conduct which has been followed since Smolensk and which

has reduced six hundred thousand families to beggary. The fire pumps of the city of Moscow had been broken or removed, and part of the weapons in the arsenal had been given to criminals who forced us to fire several rounds of artillery on the Kremlin in order to dislodge them. Since the Russian army had left Moscow unprotected, common humanity and Your Majesty's own interests required that this city be entrusted to my safekeeping. The administration, the magistrates, and the militia should have been left here. It was thus that things were done in Vienna, on two occasions, in Berlin, and in Madrid. It was thus that we ourselves acted in Milan when Suvarov entered it. Fire authorizes looting, which the soldier permits himself in order to save the remnants from the flames. If I thought that such things were committed on Your Majesty's orders, I would not write you this letter. But I do not believe it possible that Your Majesty, with your principles, your kind-heartedness, your rectitude of mind, could have authorized these excesses, which are unworthy of a sovereign and of a great nation.

[Conversation, 1817] At the time of Cannae the Romans redoubled their efforts [against Hannibal], but then, those were times when people had reason to fear rape, massacre, and pillage for themselves. That's what I call making war, whereas, in our modern campaigns, everything is done with kid gloves.

THE SOLDIERLY VIRTUES

{296} [Conseil d'état, 1806] The only kind of fanaticism that is good for anything is military fanaticism: it is needed if men are to let themselves be killed.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] Hardship, blood, and death create enthusiasts and martyrs and give birth to bold and desperate resolutions.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] The Greeks in the service of the Great King

were not enthusiastic in his cause. The Swiss in French, Spanish, and Italian service were not enthusiastic in their causes. The troops of Frederick the Great, mostly foreigners, were not enthusiastic in his cause. A good general, good training, and good discipline make good troops independently of the cause in which they fight. It is true, however, that fanaticism, love of fatherland, and national glory can inspire fresh troops to good advantage.

{297} [Proclamation, 1799] The chief virtues of a soldier are constancy and discipline. Valor comes only in second place.

[Proclamation, 1801] If valor is the soldier's first virtue, constancy is the second.

[Conversation, 1817] A soldier must do his duty without seeking out danger.

[Conversation, 1817] Troops are made to let themselves be killed.

{298} [Order of the Day, Cairo, January 8, 1799] Citizen Boyer, surgeon in charge of the wounded at Alexandria, was coward enough to refuse aid to those wounded who had been in contact with patients supposedly struck by contagious diseases.{299} He is unworthy of being a French citizen He will be dressed up as a woman and led, on a donkey, through the streets of Alexandria, with a sign on his back, reading: UNWORTHY OF BEING A FRENCH CITIZEN: HE IS AFRAID OF DYING.

[Letter to the minister of marine, 1804] What I want you to preserve is honor, and not a few planks and men.

[Letter to General Clarke, 1809] Whoever prefers death to ignominy will save his life and live in honor, but he who prefers life will die and cover himself with disgrace.

{300} [Note to Fouché, 1805] One obtains everything from men by

appealing to their sense of honor.

[Conversation, 1800s] Conscription forms citizen armies. Voluntary enlistment forms armies of vagrants and good-for-nothings. The former are guided by honor; mere discipline controls the latter.

[Conseil d'état, 1806] I should like the disciplinary rules that are to be drawn up for the navy to give the officers no more right to beat our sailors than they have to beat our soldiers, because it is an absolute principle of the French that every blow received must be returned.

[Conversation, November 9, 1816, reported in English. Napoleon explains how he would reform the English army] Instead of the lash, I would lead them by the stimulus of honor. I would instill a degree of emulation into their minds. I would promote every deserving soldier, as I did in France....What might not be expected of the English army if every soldier hoped to be made a general provided he showed the ability? [General] Bingham says, however, that most of your soldiers are brutes and must be driven by the stick. But surely the English soldiers must be possessed of sentiments sufficient to put them at least upon a level with the soldiers of other countries, where the degrading system of the lash is not used. Whatever debases man cannot be serviceable.

[Conversation, January 10, 1817, related by Gourgaud] The Emperor asserted that the only way of keeping soldiers to their duty was to drive them with blows. I cited the example of the Germans, who are led in that manner and whom our soldiers have always defeated. His Majesty wants order and discipline everywhere. “Look at the English! And sure enough they have defeated us, although they are undoubtedly inferior to our soldiers!”

BUILDING AN ARMY'S MORALE

{301} [Letter to the Directory, Carrù, April 24, 1796] You have no idea of the army's military and administrative situation. When I arrived, its morale was being undermined by all the malcontents. There was no bread, no discipline, no subordination. I took some strong measures; I used every means to reorganize the supplies; victory has done the rest. However, the paucity of our wagons, the poor quality of our horses, and a grasping administration are plunging us into complete destitution. My life here is inconceivable. I arrive tired, I must stay up all night for administrative work, and I must go everywhere in person to restore order. The ill-fed soldiers let themselves go to excesses of cruelty that make one blush for being a man. The capture of Ceva and Mondovi may replenish our supplies, and I shall make some terrifying examples of the looters. Either I shall restore order or I shall cease to command these bandits.

[Letter to the Directory, Cherasco, April 26, 1796] All goes well. There is less looting....The wretches [i.e., the looters] are excusable: after languishing for three years on the crest of the Alps, they came into the promised land and wanted to taste of its fruits. I had three of them shot and sent six more back to break stones beyond the Var.

{302} [Letter to the Directory, Peschiera, June 1, 1796] The last Austrians have been expelled from Italy! Our outposts are in the mountains of Germany. I shall not cite the men who have distinguished themselves by feats of bravery; I would have to name every grenadier and every rifleman in the vanguard. They play and laugh with death....Nothing equals their courage unless it is the cheerfulness with which they bear up under the most exhausting marches. They sing in turn of fatherland and of love. You would think at least that on reaching their bivouacs they would want to sleep.

Nothing of the sort. Everybody tells of what he has done, or else he talks about the next day's plan of operations, and often I find that they grasp things very clearly. The other day, I watched a demi-brigade marching past. A soldier of the light infantry stepped up to my horse. "General," he said, "you must do this and that."—"You wretch," I answered, "will you keep quiet!" and he vanished instantly. I vainly sent to look for him. Indeed, what he wanted was exactly what I had ordered to be done.

HOW TO SPEAK TO SOLDIERS

{303} [Letter to General Brune, 1800] You know what words can do to soldiers.

[Proclamation to the Army of Italy, Albenga, April 10, 1796] Soldiers! You are ill-fed and almost naked. The government owes you a great deal, but it can do nothing for you. Your patience and courage do you honor but give you neither worldly goods nor glory. I shall lead you into the most fertile plains on earth. There you shall find great cities and rich provinces. There you shall find honor, glory, riches. Soldiers of the Army of Italy! Could courage and constancy possibly fail you?

[Proclamation, San Massimo, November 11, 1796] When the drum has beaten the charge, when you must march straight upon the foe, bayonets fixed, your gloomy silence pledging victory—soldiers, remember to be worthy of yourselves!

[Proclamation on his return from Elba, Gulf of Juan, March 1, 1815] Soldiers! Come and take your places under the flags of your leader! He has no existence except in your existence; he has no rights except your rights and those of the people; his interests, his honor, his glory are none other than your interests, your honor, your glory. Victory will march at a quickstep. The eagle and tricolor shall fly from steeple to steeple to the

towers of Notre Dame. Then you can show your scars without dishonor, then you can pride yourselves on what you have accomplished: you will be the liberators of the fatherland! In your old age, surrounded and admired by your fellow citizens, who will listen with respect when you tell of your great deeds, you will be able to say with pride, “I, too, was part of that Grand Army which twice entered the walls of Vienna, which entered Rome, Berlin, Madrid, and Moscow, which cleansed Paris of the pollution that treason and the presence of the enemy had left in it.”

THE FRENCH SOLDIER

{304} [Recorded by Chaptal, presumably from several conversations] A general’s principal talent consists in knowing the mentality of the soldier and in winning his confidence. And, in these two respects, the French soldier is more difficult to lead than any other. He is not a machine to be put in motion but a reasonable being that must be directed.

The French soldier possesses bravery of an impatient sort and a sense of honor that makes him capable of the greatest efforts; but he is in need of severe discipline and he must not be left idle for long.

The French soldier loves to argue, because he is intelligent. He is a severe judge of his officers’ ability and courage. He subjects campaign plans and every single military maneuver to discussion. When he approves of the operations and respects his superior, there is nothing he cannot do. But it is equally true that, in the contrary case, one cannot count on victory.

The French soldier is the only European soldier who can fight on an empty stomach. No matter how long a battle lasts, he forgets to eat so long as there is danger. He is more demanding than any other soldier as soon as he no longer faces the enemy.

The French soldier is indefatigable whenever he pursues a retreating enemy. He is capable of marching ten to twelve leagues a day and fighting for two or three hours in the evening. I repeatedly took advantage of this characteristic during my first Italian campaign.

A common French soldier is more interested in winning a battle than is a Russian officer. He invariably attributes the major part of a victory to the unit in which he serves.

The art of retreating is more difficult with French troops than with Russian ones. A single lost battle takes away a Frenchman's strength and courage, weakens his trust in his superiors, and pushes him to insubordination.

Russian, Prussian, and German soldiers stay at their posts from a sense of duty; the French soldier, from a sense of honor. The former are almost indifferent to defeat, the latter are humiliated by defeat.

[Dictation, Saint Helena, on the battle of Waterloo] Never did the French army fight better than on that day.

ON THE NAVAL MENTALITY

{305} [Letter, 1804] Whatever naval expeditions we have undertaken since I became head of the government have invariably failed because the admirals see double and have picked up the notion, I know not where, that one can make war without taking any risks.

[Conversation, 1816] Oh, why could not this man [Admiral Suffren, 1726-88] have lived in my time! Or why could I not find someone of his mold? I would have made him our Nelson, and things would have taken a different turn. But I spent all my time looking for the man the navy needed without ever finding him. There is in the naval profession a specialized,

technical mentality which blocked all my plans. No sooner had I proposed a new idea than I had Ganteaume and the whole navy on my neck: “Sire, this is impossible.”—”Why?”—”Sire, the winds don’t allow it, and then the doldrums, the currents”—and with that they stopped me short. How can a man argue with people who speak a different language? Time and again, at the Conseil d'état, I would reproach them with taking unfair advantage of that circumstance. According to them, one has to be born in the navy in order to understand anything about it.

SUNDRY MILITARY MAXIMS

{306} [Memorandum, 1795] War must feed war.

[Instructions, 1795] The basic principle that we must follow in directing the armies of the Republic is this: that they must feed themselves on war at the expense of the enemy territory.{307}

{308} [Pamphlet, 1793] It is axiomatic in the art of war that the side which remains behind its fortified line is always defeated. Experience and theory agree on that point.

[Note, 1808] It should not be believed that a march of three or four days in the wrong direction can be corrected by a countermarch. As a rule, this is to make two mistakes instead of one.

[Conversation, 1813] When an enemy army is in flight, you must either build a golden bridge for it or stop it with a wall of steel.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] At the beginning of a campaign, much thought should be given to whether an offensive or defensive strategy is to be adopted. However, once the offensive has started, it must be sustained to the last extremity, for...retreats are always disastrous. They cost more lives and matériel than the bloodiest battles, with this additional difference, that in a

battle the enemy loses approximately as much as you, while in a retreat you lose and he does not.

{309} [Repeated remark] The ancients had a great advantage over us in that their armies were not trailed by a second army of pen-pushers.

[Conversation, 1817] The present organization by divisions is excellent, for each division is complete with its own organs, just like the Roman legion.

{310} [Letter, 1809] As a rule it is easy to find officers, but it is sometimes very hard to find non-commissioned officers.

[Order issued after inspecting the military academy at Saint-Cyr, 1809] The minister [of war administration] will issue an order to the effect that every pupil at the battalion school must practice target shooting....Indeed, it is most desirable to train young officers who, without having served as privates, are capable of teaching the private how to shoot straight. Nothing of all this is done at the Military School. We are coming back to the old-fashioned training, and I want the cadets to learn in particular what every old sergeant is supposed to know.

[Repeated remark, on his marshals] Those people think they are indispensable; they don’t know I have a hundred division commanders who can take their place.

[Conversation, 1817, reported by Gourgaud] The Emperor declared that in France the general officers are drawing much too much pay. The privates’ pay should be raised. The sergeants should draw half again as much as the privates; second lieutenants, twice as much; lieutenants, three times; captains, four times; colonels, six times; brigadiers, eight times; division commanders, ten times. We should do as the Spartans did: the

generals ought to mess with the ranks.

{311} [Army order, 1796] The bayonet has always been the weapon of the brave and the chief tool of victory.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] The rifle is the best engine of war ever invented by man.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] Of the three arms—cavalry, infantry, and artillery—none must be despised. All three are equally important.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] It is a principle of warfare, that when it is possible to make use of thunderbolts, they should be preferred to cannon.

[Dictation, Saint Helena] Five things there are from which the soldier must never be separated: his gun, his cartridges, his field pack, his rations for at least four days, and his digging tool.

{312} [Letter, 1813] The soldier's health must come before economy or any other consideration.

THE GENERAL'S SHARE IN VICTORY

{313} [Note, August 27, 1808] In war, moral factors account for three quarters of the whole; relative material strength accounts for only one quarter.

[Note, August 30, 1808] In war, men are nothing, one man is everything.

{314} [Conversation, 1803] For all the faith I have in French valor, I have equal faith in my lucky star, or perhaps in myself, and as a result I never count positively on victory unless I myself am in command.

[Conversation, 1817] The ideal army would be the one in which every officer would know what he ought to do in every contingency; the best possible army is the one that comes closest to this. I give myself only half

the credit for the battles I have won, and a general gets enough credit when he is named at all, for the fact is that a battle is won by the army.

ESSENTIALS OF GREAT GENERALSHIP

{315} [Dictation, Saint Helena] A military leader must possess as much character as intellect *(esprit).* Men who have a great deal of intellect and little character are the least suited; they are like a ship whose masts are out of proportion to the ballast; it is preferable to have much character and little intellect. Those men whose intellect is mediocre and whose character is in proportion are likely to succeed in their profession. The base must equal the height. Generals who possessed intellect and character to an equally high degree were Caesar, Hannibal, Turenne, Prince Eugene [of Savoy], and Frederick [the Great].

By "character" Napoleon seems to have understood physical courage as well as perseverance, daring, and similar qualities. The equilibrium of intellect and character, which he liked to call "squareness," was one of his favorite notions, as was his distinction between physical and moral courage.

[Conversation, December 1815, related by Las Cases] As for moral courage, Napoleon said, he had rarely encountered the "courage of 2 A.M."—that is, the extemporaneous courage which, even in the most sudden emergencies, leaves one's freedom of mind, judgment, and decision completely unaffected. He asserted unequivocally that he had known himself to possess that 2 A.M. courage to a higher degree than any other man.

{316} [Letter to General Lauriston, 1804] These three things you must always keep in mind: concentration of strength, activity, and a firm resolve to perish gloriously. They are the three principles of the military art which have disposed luck in my favor in all my operations. Death is nothing; but

to live defeated and without glory is to die every day.

[Conversation, 1816, reported in English] Desaix loved glory for its own sake and despised everything else. Desaix was wholly wrapped up in war and glory. To him riches and pleasure had no value, nor did he give them a moment's thought. He was a little, black-looking man, about an inch shorter than I am, always badly dressed, sometimes even ragged, contemptuous of comfort or convenience. When in Egypt, I made him a present of a complete field equipage several times, but he always lost it. Wrapped up in a cloak, Desaix threw himself under a gun and slept as contentedly as if he were in a palace. For him luxury had no charms. Upright and honest in all his proceedings, he was called by the Arabs the Just Sultan. He was intended by nature to be a great general.

THE INTANGIBLES OF THE ART

{317} [Dictation, 1797] The art of war consists, with a numerically inferior army, in always having larger forces than the enemy at the point which is to be attacked or defended. But this art can be learned neither from books nor from practice: it is an intuitive way of acting which properly constitutes the genius of war.

[Letter, 1806] In war nothing can be gained except by calculation. Whatever has not been profoundly meditated in all its details is totally ineffectual.

[Conversation, 1800s] Military science consists in first calculating all the possibilities accurately and then in making an almost mathematically exact allowance for accident. It is on this point that one must make no mistake; a decimal more or less may alter everything. Now, this apportioning of knowledge and accident can take place only in the head of a genius, for without it there can be no creation—and surely the greatest improvisation of

the human mind is that which gives existence to the non-existent. Accident thus always remains a mystery to mediocre minds and becomes reality for superior men.

[Conversation, 1816, reported by Las Cases] Napoleon said that war consists of nothing but accidents and that a commander, though he must always adjust himself to general principles, should never overlook anything that might enable him to exploit these accidents. The vulgar would call this luck, but in fact it is the characteristic of genius.

{318} [Dictation, Saint Helena] The art of war is a simple art; everything is in the performance. There is nothing vague in it; everything in it is common sense; ideology does not enter in.

[Conversation, 1818] The art of war is like everything that is beautiful and simple. The simplest moves are the best. If Macdonald [one of Napoleon's generals], instead of doing whatever he did, had asked a peasant for the way to Genoa, the peasant would have answered, "Through Bobbio"—and that would have been a superb move.

[Conversation, 1818] My great and most distinctive talent is to see everything in a clear light; even my eloquence is of the kind which sees the core of each question from all its facets at once—like the perpendicular, which is shorter than the diagonal. The great art of winning a battle consists in changing one's line of operations in the middle of the action. This idea is entirely my own and altogether new. It's what made me win at Marengo: the enemy attacked my line of operations in order to cut it, but I had changed it and so he himself was cut in two.

{319} [Conversation, Saint Helena, 1815] The issue of a battle is the result of a single instant, a single thought. The adversaries come into each other's presence with various combinations; they mingle; they fight for a length of

time; the decisive moment appears; a psychological spark makes the decision; and a few reserve troops are enough to carry it out.

[Conversation, Saint Helena] Sometimes a single battle decides everything, and sometimes, too, the slightest circumstance decides the issue of a battle.

[Dictation, c. 1820] There is a moment in every battle at which the least maneuver is decisive and gives superiority, as one drop of water causes overflow.

{320} [Dictation, Saint Helena] Tactics can be learned from treatises, somewhat like geometry, and so can the various military evolutions or the science of the engineer and the gunner; but knowledge of the grand principles of warfare can be acquired only through the study of military history and of the battles of the great captains and through experience. There are no precise, determinate rules: everything depends on the character that nature has bestowed on the general, on his qualities and defects, on the nature of the troops, on the range of the weapons, on the season of the year, and on a thousand circumstances which are never twice the same.

[Same dictation] The ignorant suspect no difficulties. They want to solve a problem of transcendental mathematics by means of a second-degree formula. All questions of grand tactics are indeterminate physico-mathematical equations that are incapable of solution by formulas of elementary mathematics.

ON EIGHT GREAT CAPTAINS

The last two quotations, whose validity remains unaffected by even the most revolutionary changes in warfare, come from Napoleon’s notes on a book entitled *Considérations sur l’art de la guerre*, by General Rogniat

(Paris, 1816). Baron Rogniat in his work distinguished dogmatically between “invasion warfare” and “methodical warfare”; he asserted that “the reserve army must choose and prepare a line of defense, which I shall call a ‘base of operations,’ behind which the field army may, in case of reverses, be brought up to strength, regrouped, reorganized, and rested, and at which it can stop the enemy with the help of contrived and natural obstacles.” These assertions drew particular scorn from Napoleon, as can be seen below.

{321} Every offensive war is invasion warfare; every well-conducted war is methodical warfare. Defensive warfare does not exclude attacking, nor does offensive warfare exclude defensive fighting, although its aim is to force the frontier and to invade the enemy’s country. The principles of warfare are those which guided the great captains whose high deeds history has transmitted to us—Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Turenne, Eugene of Savoy, Frederick the Great....The history of their eighty-three campaigns would constitute a complete treatise on the art of war; the principles that must be followed in defensive and offensive warfare would flow from it as from a common source.

Napoleon continues with a survey of the campaigns of these great captains. His judgments have been juxtaposed below with contrasting or complementary judgments made at other times. Where no other source is indicated, the excerpts are taken from the “Notes on the Art of War.”

Alexander the Great

{322} His warfare was methodical and deserves the highest praise. Not one of his convoys was interrupted. His armies always grew as they advanced; they were weakest on the Granicus, at the outset, and they had tripled when they reached the Indus, not counting the troops commanded by the

governors of the conquered provinces....Alexander deserves the reputation he has enjoyed in every century and every nation. But what if he had been defeated at Issus, where Darius' army had taken its battle position across his line of retreat, flanked by the mountains on the left and the sea on the right, while the Macedonians had the mountains on their right, the sea on their left, and the Cilician Gates behind them? What if he had been beaten at Arbela, with the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the desert in his rear, with no fortified places and at nine hundred leagues from Macedon? What if he had been defeated by Porus and forced back against the Indus?

[Conversation, 1817] In order to weigh the merits of generals, the quality of their troops and of those of the enemy must be taken into consideration. When one examines the exploits of Agesilaus and the defeat of Xerxes' army at Marathon by ten thousand Greeks, it becomes obvious how few were the obstacles that Alexander had to overcome in defeating his enemies. He gave only a few battles, and his triumphs were due to the order of the phalanx rather than his generalship. In all his campaigns it is impossible to discover a single fine maneuver worthy of a great general. He was a brave soldier, a grenadier like Léon.{323} Why did he come back to Egypt instead of taking advantage of his victory over the Persians?

Hannibal

{324} In 218 B.C., Hannibal left Carthagena, passed the Ebro and the Pyrenees (which until then had been unknown to the Carthaginians), crossed the Rhône and the Cottian Alps, and, in his first campaign, gained a foothold amidst the Cisalpine Gauls, who...had never yet been subjugated. For this march of four hundred leagues, he took five months. He did not leave a single garrison in his rear, or a supply depot, and he kept no communications with either Spain or Carthage, with which he communicated only after the battle of Lake Trasimene. No vaster or grander

plan was ever carried out by man....Yet this war of offense was methodical. The Cisalpine Gauls of Milan and Bologna became Carthaginians for his purposes. If he had left garrisons and depots behind him, he would have weakened his army and compromised his chances of success; he would have been vulnerable from every side. In 217, he crossed the Apennines, defeated the Roman army on Lake Trasimene, converged on Rome, and led his army to the Adriatic coast whence, for the first time, he communicated with Carthage. In 216, eighty thousand Romans attacked him; he routed them at Cannae. Had he marched on, he would have reached Rome in six days and Carthage would have been mistress of the world! However, that victory [Cannae] had immeasurable consequences: Capua opened its gates; a large number of Greek colonies and many towns of southern Italy joined the victor and abandoned the cause of Rome. It was Hannibal's principle to keep his forces united and to garrison but one single fortress, which he kept for himself in order to lock up his hostages, his large engines of war, his important prisoners, and his sick, while trusting the maintenance of his communications to the good faith of his allies. He maintained himself in Italy for fifteen years without receiving any reinforcements from Carthage and evacuated her only when his government ordered him to hasten to the defense of his fatherland. Luck betrayed him at Zama. Carthage ceased to exist. But what if he had been beaten on the Trebbia, at Lake Trasimene, at Cannae—what worse fate could have happened to him?...Defeated at the very gates of his capital, he was unable to save his army from total destruction. And if he had left one half or even only one third of his army at his first and second bases of operations, would he have been victorious on the Trebbia, at Cannae, at Trasimene? No. All would have been lost, even his reserves, and history would have ignored him.

[Later passage, same dictation] As for Hannibal's crossing of the Alps,

its difficulty has been exaggerated; only the elephants could cause him any trouble. Beginning in 600 B.C., or four centuries before Hannibal, the Gauls used to pass the Alps and invade Italy.

Julius Caesar

{325} Caesar's principles were the same as Alexander's and Hannibal's: to keep his forces united; to be vulnerable at no point, to strike speedily at critical points; to rely on moral factors, such as his reputation and the fear he inspired, as well as on political means in order to insure the loyalty of his allies and the submissiveness of the conquered nations; to make use of every possible opportunity of increasing his chances of victory on the battlefield and, in order to accomplish this, to unite all his troops.

[Conversation, 1817] Caesar...had to fight courageous enemies. He took great risks in the adventures into which he was pushed by his boldness; his genius got him out of his difficulties. His battles in the Civil War—that's what I call real battles, taking into account the enemies he had to fight as well as the qualities of their generals. He was a man whose genius and boldness were equally great.

Gustavus Adolphus

{326} Gustavus Adolphus crossed the Baltic, seized the island of Rügen and Pomerania, and led his men to the Vistula, the Rhine, and the Danube. He fought two battles. Victorious at Leipzig, he also won at Lützen; but there he met his death. So brief a military career has left lasting memories because of the boldness and speed of his movements and the organization and intrepidity of his troops. Gustavus Adolphus acted on the same principles as Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar.

[Conversation, 1817] There is your great Gustavus! In eighteen months, he wins one battle, loses another, and is killed in the third. A cheaply earned

reputation if ever there was one!...Tilly and Wallenstein were better generals than Gustavus Adolphus. There is not a single scientific maneuver this prince is known to have made. He evacuated Bavaria because Tilly outmaneuvered him, and he allowed Magdeburg to be taken right under his eyes. A fine reputation!

Turenne and Eugene of Savoy

{327} Turenne's maneuvers and marches in the campaigns of 1646, 1648, 1672, and 1673 were based on the same principles as those of Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, and Gustavus Adolphus....The boldness and length of these marches astonished France, and, until they were justified by success, they were the target for the criticism of mediocre men. If he had built bases every thirty leagues, if he had left reserve armies behind, they would have been defeated separately.

Prince Eugene, in his campaign of 1706, started from Trent, followed the left bank of the Adige, crossed that river before the French did, followed the Po upstream along the left bank, crossed the Tanaro before the duke of Orléans, and joined the duke of Savoy below Turin. There he turned all the lines of the French, attacked their right between the Sesia and the Dora, and forced his passage through them. This audacious march was crowned by the most brilliant success. What would that great man have said if it had been suggested to him that he establish four bases and twelve fortresses and leave the larger part of his army behind in them—he who, with only thirty thousand men, paid no attention to the army of the duke of Orléans, which was on his flank and rear?

Frederick the Great

On Frederick the Great, Napoleon had little of interest to say in his "Notes on the Art of War," but he dictated a whole separate volume on

Frederick’s campaigns, from which the following excerpt is taken.

{328} Everything proves that [in the Seven Years War] Frederick could not have withstood France, Austria, and Russia throughout a campaign if these powers had cooperated in good faith; nor could he have conducted two campaigns against Austria and Russia if the Russian cabinet had allowed its armies to occupy winter quarters in the theater of operations. Thus the miraculous element in the Seven Years War evaporates. But Frederick’s actual accomplishments justify the reputation which the Prussian army enjoyed through the latter half of the eighteenth century and enhance rather than diminish Frederick’s great military fame.

[Earlier passage in the same commentary on Frederick] The battle of Leuthen is a masterpiece of operations, maneuvers, and resolution. By itself, it would be enough to immortalize Frederick and to place him among the greatest generals.

[Conversation, 1817] What distinguishes Frederick most is not the cleverness of his moves but his boldness.

Charles XII of Sweden

Whether criticized or admired, boldness is the common quality singled out by Napoleon in the seven great generals whom he cites as examples. Probably none of them was as bold as Charles XII, for whom Napoleon had nothing but criticism. Since Napoleon fell into the same traps as Charles (but with Charles’s warning example before his eyes), he was particularly anxious to deny the existence of a parallel. The following excerpt comes from the “Notes on the Art of War.”

{329} 1. Charles XII traversed five hundred leagues of enemy territory [in Russia]. 2. He lost his line of operations the day after he left Smolensk. 3. He remained a whole year without receiving news from Stockholm. 4. He

had no reserve army.

1. Napoleon went only one hundred leagues into enemy territory. 2. He always maintained his line of operations. 3. He daily received news and supplies from France. 4. He kept three quarters of his army in reserve between the Vistula and Moscow. Moreover, Charles made war with forty thousand men, Napoleon with four hundred thousand. Their two respective operations were diametrically opposed: as the one followed the rules and calculated the means in proportion to the end, so the other miscalculated both end and means.

ON PLANNING A CAMPAIGN

{330} [Conversation, 1799] There is no man more pusillanimous than I when I am planning a campaign. I purposely exaggerate all the dangers and all the calamities that the circumstances make possible. I am in a thoroughly painful state of agitation. This does not keep me from looking quite serene in front of my entourage; I am like an unmarried girl laboring with child. Once I have made up my mind, everything is forgotten except what leads to success.

{331} [Dictation, 1797, on the Carinthian campaign of 1797] It is said and repeated everywhere that the Army of Italy was lost [when Napoleon signed the armistice at Leoben] and that, if Bonaparte had not by good fortune made peace, he would have joined the ranks of the prisoners at Olmütz.

Bonaparte entered Germany from three sides at the same time—through the Tyrol, Carinthia, and Carniola. In thus dividing his forces, he had no fear of being too weak everywhere, for the enemy forces themselves were thus placed. Besides, he was obliged to attack in that manner in order to leave his retreat open and to make sure that he could cover his magazines and depots.

But when the enemy was fleeing on all sides and had abandoned his magazines, twenty-four thousand prisoners, and sixty artillery pieces to Bonaparte, who had taken possession of Trieste, Gorizia, Klagenfurt, and Bressanone, then Bonaparte felt that he himself was in turn open to attack. The enemy, having retreated far beyond the mountains, was capable of reuniting his forces, of masking his movements, of falling on Bonaparte's several divisions, and of routing them one by one. Bonaparte carefully refrained from having his divisions in the Tyrol march on Innsbruck; instead, he made them come into Carinthia. He also ordered into Carinthia the division that was stationed in Carniola—instead of sending it to Istria, as a less able general might have done—and he garrisoned Klagenfurt and made it his principal depot.

By this means, instead of three lines of communication he had only one; instead of being obliged to keep in check the traditionally unfriendly and turbulent Tyrolese, he evacuated the Tyrol and had nothing more to fear on their account; and instead of holding a front line eighty leagues long, he concentrated the Army of Italy in one single point which threatened Vienna, Hungary, and Bavaria at the same time.

{332} [Comments dictated in 1806 on Kutuzov's official report on the Moravian campaign of 1805] The battle of Austerlitz itself is merely the outcome of the plan of the Moravian campaign. In an art as difficult as the art of war, the scheme of a battle is often implicit in the scheme of the campaign. Only the most experienced military men will understand this. Two weeks before the battle, when the Emperor returned from his reconnaissance trip to Wischau, the persons of his entourage heard him say, concerning the heights on which the postal relay and the ponds are situated: "Be sure to reconnoiter all these heights thoroughly; you will fight a battle here before two months." At first they paid no attention to his words, but on

the day after the battle they remembered them.

In planning the Moravian campaign, the Emperor understood that the Russians, since they lacked a first-rate general, would think that the line of retreat of the French army was anchored on Vienna. Consequently, they had to attach great importance to cutting the Vienna road, whereas in fact, throughout the whole Moravian campaign, the French line of retreat was never intended to bear on Vienna. This single circumstance falsified all the enemy's calculations and was bound to make him decide on movements which led to his annihilation.

RESOLUTION LOST AND RECOVERED

{333} ["Note on the general state of my affairs," Dresden, August 30, 1813] There are two plans that I can adopt. The first would be to march on Prague, taking advantage of my successes against Austria. But, in the first place, I am no longer able to reach Prague before the enemy, and Prague being strongly fortified, I would then be unable to take it. Bohemia might rise against me, and I would be in a difficult spot. In the second place, the enemy forces in Silesia would attack my own forces there, and this would compromise my position in Prague. It is true that that army [i.e., the French forces in Silesia] could retreat to Dresden and base their defense on it. In the third place, given this state of affairs, Oudinot's army as well as that of the prince of Eckmühl [Davout] would have to remain on the defensive [in North Germany], and by mid-October I would have lost nine thousand men at Stettin. I would then be occupying the Elbe line from Prague to the Baltic Sea. That line is too long: if it were penetrated at any point, the 32d military district [i.e., the German territories annexed to France] would be open to attack, and I would be obliged to turn back in order to defend the most vulnerable part of my Empire. The Russians have nothing to fear either for

their own country or for Poland; they would reinforce their army between the Oder and the Elbe, in Mecklenburg and Bohemia.

Thus the project of marching on Prague has disadvantages. 1. The probability of my being able to take Prague is not strong enough to amount to certainty. 2. I would be placed, with the major part of my forces, in an altogether different military situation; and, as for my person, I would be placed at one extremity of my front. Thus I would be unable to reach any threatened point in time; my lieutenants would make mistakes; and the war would be carried into the area between the Elbe and the Rhine, which is what the enemy wants. 3. I would lose my fortresses on the Oder and could not reach Danzig.

If, on the contrary, I march on Berlin, I immediately achieve a major result: I protect my front from Hamburg to Dresden; I am at the center [of the front]; I relieve Stettin and Küstrin; I am able to effect without delay a separation of the Russian and the Austrian forces; I can easily keep myself supplied in Berlin at this time of the year; I shall be supplied with potatoes, with the great resources of that city, by way of the canals, etc.; and I shall keep the war in the area in which it has been fought thus far. In my warfare with Austria, my only disadvantage would be the sacrifice of one hundred twenty thousand men, who would defend the line between Dresden and Hof; this defense would be a useful training for these raw troops. I can derive political advantage vis-à-vis Austria by sparing Bohemia. With the Austrians immobilized by the presence of one hundred twenty thousand men on its borders, I shall be threatening Prague without having to go there. The Prussians will not care to stay in Bohemia once their capital has been taken, and even the Russians will fear to lose Poland when they see the Polish forces [under Napoleon] massed on the Oder. One of two things must then happen. The Russians and the Prussian forces in Bohemia will force

Austria to resume the offensive and to return to Dresden. This will take them at least two weeks. By that time I have taken Berlin, relieved Stettin, destroyed the Prussian fieldworks, and disorganized the *Landwehr.* Then, if Austria starts acting foolish again, I return to Dresden with my whole reunited army: great events, a great battle, would end both the campaign and the war.

Finally, in my present position, any plan in which I am not personally at the center is inadmissible. Any plan that keeps me away [from the scene of operations] would result in a conventional kind of warfare in which the enemy's superior cavalry, numbers, and even generals would lead me to total ruin.

Napoleon's reasoning, though it miscarried, would seem worthy of his reputation; yet the very fact that he resorted to dictation in order to think it out was a sign of his irresolution. It was only in 1814, when French soil was invaded, that Napoleon roused himself to an activity that bordered on the superhuman, as a flame flares highest just before its death.

{334} [Letter to Marshal Augereau, commandant of Lyons, dictated at Nogent, February 21, 1814] My Cousin, the minister of war has shown me the letter you wrote him on the 16th. That letter has caused me acute suffering. What! Six hours after receiving the first reinforcements from Spain you had not yet taken the field? Six hours' rest was enough for them. I have won the engagement at Nangis with a brigade of dragoons that came from Spain and had not unbridled their horses since Bayonne. You say that the six battalions from the Nîmes district are lacking clothes and equipment and are untrained. What a poor excuse, Augereau! I have annihilated eighty thousand enemy troops with battalions made up of raw recruits who had no knapsacks and were poorly clad. You say the militia is pitiful: I have four

thousand of them here, from Angers and Brittany, wearing round hats and wooden shoes, without cartridge pouches, but with good rifles. I have used them to good advantage. There is no money, you continue: and where do you think you can get money from? You cannot get any money until we have wrested our tax receipts from the enemy's hands. You lack carriages: take them where you can find them. You have no magazines: don't be ridiculous. I command you to leave within twelve hours from the time you receive this letter and to take the field. If you are still the old Augereau of Castiglione, keep your command. If your sixty years weigh too heavy upon you, resign your command and hand it to the senior general officer on your staff. The fatherland is threatened and in danger. Only boldness and good will can save it, not futile temporizing. You must have a core of more than six thousand elite troops. I have not that many, but nevertheless I have destroyed three armies, taken forty thousand prisoners and two hundred cannon, and thrice saved the capital. From all sides the enemy is fleeing toward Troyes. Be the first on the firing line! It no longer is a question of making war as we did in the last few years: we must put our boots on again along with our resolution of 1793! When the French soldier sees your white plumes at the outposts, when he sees that you are the first to expose yourself to the fire, you can make him do anything you like.

WHY WELLINGTON SHOULD HAVE LOST AT WATERLOO

{335} [Dictation, Saint Helena] 1. The English commander [Wellington] accepted battle at Waterloo on June 18. His decision was contrary to his nation's best interests and to the strategy adopted by the Allies; it violated every rule of warfare. It was against the interest of England—who needs all her available manpower for her armies in India, for her American colonies, and for her other establishments—to accept with a light heart the risk of a murderous battle, which might have cost her the only army she had or, at

least, the flower of her men. The Allied strategy was to act in a mass and not to engage in separate battles. Nothing was further from their interests and their plan than to risk the issue of their cause in a hazardous battle in which the opposing forces were approximately equal and all the probabilities were against them. If the Anglo-Dutch army had been destroyed at Waterloo, what good would all the armies that were getting ready to cross the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees have done the Allies?

2. When he made the decision to await battle in front of the Soigne Forest, the English general counted on the cooperation of the Prussians; but their junction could not take place before the afternoon. Thus he was exposed alone from 4 A.M. to 4 P.M., that is, for twelve hours. A battle ordinarily lasts six hours. Thus that cooperation was illusory.

3. However, what is more, since he counted on the cooperation of the Prussians, he must have supposed that he was facing the entire French army. Thus he had the notion that with ninety thousand men of various nationalities he could defend his battlefield for twelve hours against one hundred four thousand Frenchmen.

This calculation was obviously in error. He could not have held out for three hours. All would have been over by 8 A.M., and the Prussians would have made their appearance only to be outflanked. In a single day two armies would have been destroyed.

4. If he figured that, in accord with the rules of warfare, one part of the French army had followed the Prussian army [after the Prussian defeat at Ligny], then it must have been obvious to him that he could have no assistance whatever from the Prussians. Indeed, the Prussians had been routed at Ligny; they had lost twenty-five to thirty thousand men on the battlefield; twenty thousand more of their troops were scattered; and they

were being pursued by thirty-five to forty thousand victorious Frenchmen: the Prussians were not in a position to spare any men and considered themselves barely strong enough to remain in the field. Things being thus, the Anglo-Dutch army, without any assistance, would have had to resist the efforts of sixty-two thousand Frenchmen through the whole day of June 18—and every Englishman admits that there could be no doubt about the outcome and that Wellington's army was not in a state to absorb the shock of the imperial army for six hours.

5. During the whole night of June 17-18 the weather was horrible, and the terrain was impracticable until 9 A.M. This loss of five hours (from dawn to 9 A.M.) was entirely in the enemy's favor. But could the enemy commander let the issue of such a struggle depend on the weather that would prevail on the night of June 17-18? Marshal Grouchy, with thirty-four thousand men and eight hundred guns, discovered the secret—which seemed beyond human capability—of being, throughout the day of June 17, throughout the morning of June 18, neither on the battlefield of Mont-Saint-Jean nor on his way to Wavre. But had the English commander received the marshal's assurance that he would get lost in so mysterious a manner? The conduct of Marshal Grouchy, who from the age of twenty had so often distinguished himself at the head of the cavalry, was as unforeseeable as if his army had been surprised by an earthquake and swallowed up.

6. If Marshal Grouchy had been on the battlefield of Mont-Saint-Jean—as the English and the Prussian commanders [Wellington and Blücher] thought that he was throughout the night of June 18—and if the weather had permitted the French army to maneuver on its terrain beginning at 4 A.M., the Anglo-Dutch army would have been cut up and scattered before 7 A.M.; it would have lost everything. And if the weather had kept the battle from beginning until 10 A.M., the fate of the Anglo-Dutch army would have been

sealed by 1 P.M.; its remnants would have been thrown back beyond the forest or in the direction of Hal. There would have been ample time in the evening to go to meet Marshal Blücher and to inflict a similar fate on him. If Marshal Grouchy had camped before Wavre on the evening of the 17th, the Prussian army would not have detached any forces to come to the help of the British, who would have been completely routed by the sixty-two thousand Frenchmen opposing them.

7. The position of Mont-Saint-Jean was ill-chosen [by Wellington], The first rule for choosing a battlefield is not to have any defiles at one's rear. During the battle, the English general was unable to take advantage of his numerous cavalry. He did not realize that he would necessarily be attacked on his left; he thought the attack would come from the right. Despite the diversion effected in his favor by the thirty thousand Prussians under General Bülow, he would have ordered a retreat twice during that day if a retreat had been practicable. Thus the fact—such is the bizarre course of human events!—that the poor choice of his battlefield made all retreat impossible was the cause of his victory.

[Conversation, 1817, reported in English] As a general, Wellington's plan did not show talent. He certainly displayed great courage and obstinacy, but a little must be taken away even from that when you consider that he had no means of retreat....First, to the firmness and bravery of his troops, for the English fought with the greatest obstinacy and courage, he is principally indebted for the victory, and not to his own conduct as a general; and next, to the arrival of Blücher, to whom the victory is more to be attributed than to Wellington, and more credit due as a general—because he, though beaten the day before, assembled his troops and brought them into action in the evening. I believe, however, that Wellington is a man of great firmness.

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PROJECTS AND PROPHECIES

No one can be a good adviser until he has his career behind him.

“I NEVER WAS MY OWN MASTER”

{336} [Conversation, 1816] I shall be credited with great profundity and subtlety in things which perhaps were simplicity itself. Projects will be ascribed to me which were never mine. People will wonder whether or not I really aimed at universal monarchy. It will be argued at length whether my absolute authority and my arbitrary actions were the effects of my character or of my calculations; whether they were caused by my inclination or by force of circumstance; whether I waged constant warfare to indulge my personal taste or whether I was pushed into it against my will; whether my immense ambition, for which I have been blamed so much, was spurred by lust for power, or thirst for glory, or the necessity of establishing order, or love of general welfare—for it deserves to be examined from several angles. Arguments will rage concerning the motives that led me in the catastrophic affair of the due d’Enghien{337} and on innumerable other occasions. Many matters that were altogether natural and straightforward will be subtly distorted. It is not up to me to deal specifically with these questions: I would be pleading, and this I despise....Yet by how much misinformation will [historians] be assailed, ranging from the lies and inventions of timeservers...to the revelations, “documentation,” and assertions made even by my ministers, decent people though they were, who will reveal not so much what actually took place as what they thought was taking place! For is there a single one among them who knew my whole mind? Their personal share consisted, most of the time, merely of some elements of the vast whole, of which they were unaware. Thus they

have seen only their own facet of the prism—and, at that, how unlikely they are to have seen even that facet correctly! Have they seen all of it? Was it not in its turn cut into fragments? And yet there is not one who, according to his own insight, would not present as my true policy the fantastic product of his own reasonings: hence, once more, the agreed-upon fiction called history. And it cannot be otherwise. It is true that, being several, they are unlikely to be in agreement. Besides, as far as their positive assertions go, they will prove themselves cleverer than I, for I often would have found it very difficult to assert with any degree of truth what was my whole and real intention.

[Conversation, 1816] I may have had many projects, but I never was free to carry out any of them. It did me little good to be holding the helm; no matter how strong my hands, the sudden and numerous waves were stronger still, and I was wise enough to yield to them rather than resist them obstinately and make the ship founder. Thus I never was truly my own master but was always ruled by circumstances. This is so true that when, at the beginning of my reign, during the Consulate, my true friends and most enthusiastic champions asked me, with the best intentions and for their own guidance, where I was heading, I always answered that I had not the least idea. This astonished and possibly annoyed them, and yet I was telling them the truth....The fact was that I was not master of my actions, because I was not so insane as to attempt to bend events to conform to my policies. On the contrary, I bent my policies to accord with the unforeseen shape of the events, and this is what often gave me the appearance of fickleness and inconsistency, of which I have been accused at times; but were these accusations fair?

{338} [Conversation, after 1811] France does not know my position well, and that is why she completely misjudges most of my acts. Five or six

families are sharing the thrones of Europe, and they are pained to see a Corsican taking a seat on one of them. I cannot keep my place except by using force. I cannot accustom them to look upon me as an equal except by keeping them under my yoke. As soon as I cease to be feared, my Empire is destroyed. Thus I must repress whatever they undertake. I cannot let them threaten me and not strike back. What would be an indifferent matter to a king of an old dynasty is very serious to me. I shall persist in this attitude so long as I live, and if my son does not become a great warrior, if he does not resemble me, he will have to come down from the throne to which I shall have raised him—for it takes more than one man to consolidate a monarchy. Louis XIV, despite all his earlier victories, would have lost his crown at the end of his life if he had not been the heir of a long line of kings. Among the anciently established sovereigns, war aims never go beyond possession of a province or a fortress. With me, the stake is always my existence and that of the whole Empire.

In domestic matters, my position is entirely different from that of the long-established sovereigns. They can live indolently in their palaces; they can abandon themselves shamelessly to all the debauches of riotous living. Nobody challenges their legitimate rights; nobody dreams of replacing them; nobody accuses them of ingratitude, since nobody has helped them to attain the throne. As for me, everything is different: there is no general but believes he has the same rights to the throne as I. There is no influential man who doesn’t give himself the credit for having guided my conduct on the Eighteenth Brumaire. Consequently, I must be very stern toward those people. If I were familiar with them, they would soon share my power and the public treasury. They don’t like me—but they fear me, and that’s good enough for me. I admit them into the army, I give them commands—but I also keep an eye on them. They wanted to escape my yoke; they wanted to

federalize France. One word from me was enough to stifle their plot. So long as I live, they will never be dangerous. If I suffered a defeat, they would be the first to desert me.

At home as abroad, I reign only through the fear I inspire. If I renounced this system, I would be dethroned before long. This is my position, and these are the motives that guide me.

[Conversation, date uncertain] My power is dependent on my glory, and my glory on my victories. My power would fall if I did not base it on still more glory and still more victories. Conquest made me what I am; conquest alone can keep me there.

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A newly established government must dazzle and astonish. The moment it ceases to glitter, it falls.

OF A UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

{339} [Letter to Talleyrand, 1797] We hold the balance of Europe; we shall make it tip as we choose. And, if such be the decree of destiny, I do not even consider it an impossibility that within a few years we may attain such great results as can be glimpsed by an ardent and enthusiastic imagination and as only an extremely cool-headed, steadfast, and rational man can carry out.

[Conversation, c. 1802, reported by Bourrienne] In his vast manner of looking at the world, Napoleon saw only two great States—the Orient and the Occident. ‘What does it matter,” he used to say, “whether two nations are separated by rivers or mountains, or that they speak different idioms? Except for a few shadings, France, Spain, England, Italy, and Germany have the same traditions, the same religion, the same costume. A man in these

countries can marry only one wife, and there are no slaves. These are the great divisions that separate the civilized inhabitants of the globe into two halves. Except for Turkey, Europe is but one province of the world. When we make war, we make civil war."

[Conversation, 1805] I have a few ideas that aren't ripe yet, but they are far-reaching. There is not enough sameness among the nations of Europe. European society needs a regeneration. There must be a superior power which dominates all the other powers, with enough authority to force them to live in harmony with one another—and France is best placed for that purpose.

[Conversation, 1816] One of my great conceptions was the agglomeration, the concentration, of those geographic-national entities which revolutions and politics have dissolved or broken up. Thus there are in Europe—though scattered—more than thirty million Frenchmen, fifteen million Spaniards, fifteen million Italians, thirty million Germans. I should have liked to make out of each of these peoples one single and uniform national body....

After this summary process of simplification, it would have been possible to pursue the chimera of the *beau idéal* of civilization, for in this new order of things there was an improved chance of creating everywhere uniform codes, principles, opinions, feelings, outlooks, and interests. Then, perhaps, with the help of the universal spread of education, it would have been permissible to dream of applying the American constitution to the great European family.

[Conversation, 1816, reported by Las Cases] "I, too, would have had my Congress [of Vienna] and my Holy Alliance [if the Russian campaign had succeeded]. They have stolen these ideas from me. In such a congress of

sovereigns we would have settled our interests among ourselves without asking the peoples.

The cause of the century had been won, the Revolution accomplished. All that remained to be done was reconcile it with those institutions which it had not destroyed. Now, that achievement was my mission. I had prepared it long in advance, perhaps at the cost of my popularity. No matter, I would have become the ark of the old and the new covenant, the natural mediator between the old and the new order of things. I believed in the principles and I enjoyed the trust of the one, and I identified myself with the other: I belonged to both, and I would have assigned each its own share conscientiously."...

Napoleon then reviewed the measures he would have proposed for the prosperity, interests, and welfare of the association of European states. He would have desired identical principles and systems everywhere—a European code; a European supreme court to which all cases could be appealed...; a uniform currency issued under various coinages; uniform weights, measures, laws, etc., etc.

"Europe," he said, "thus would soon have become a truly united nation, and everybody, no matter where he traveled, would always have been in the common fatherland of all."

He would have insisted on freedom of navigation for all on rivers and on the high seas and asked that standing armies be reduced to mere guards of the sovereigns....

He concluded by saying: "Once back in France, having returned to the bosom of the great, strong, magnificent, peaceful, and glorious fatherland, I would have proclaimed that its frontiers were henceforth immutable, that all future wars had to be defensive, that any further aggrandizement would be

against the national interest. I would have shared my power with my son; my dictatorship would have ended, and his constitutional reign would have begun. Paris would have been the capital of the world, and Frenchmen the cynosure of nations.

"After that, while my son was going through his royal apprenticeship, I would have spent the idle hours of my old age in visiting the remotest corners of my Empire, traveling in leisurely fashion, in company with the Empress, like a real rustic couple, with our own horses, listening to grievances, righting wrongs, leaving monuments and good deeds behind us wherever we went. More dreams, my dear fellow!"

FRANCE AS THE MASTER NATION

{340} [Conseil d'état, 1800s] I want the title of French citizen to become the finest and most desirable on earth. I want every Frenchman traveling anywhere in Europe to be able to believe himself at home.

[Letter to Joseph, 1806] I believe I have already told you that I intend to place the kingdom of Naples in my family. Together with Italy, Switzerland, Holland, and the three kingdoms of Germany, it will constitute my federated states, or the true French Empire.

[Conversation, c. 1810] The French Empire shall become the metropolis of all other sovereignties. I want to force every king in Europe to build a large palace for his use in Paris. When an Emperor of the French is crowned, these kings shall come to Paris, and they shall adorn that imposing ceremony with their presence and salute it with their homages.

[Conversation, 1816] It was a part of my ceaseless dreams to make Paris the true capital of Europe. At times, for instance, I wanted it to become a city of two, three, or four million inhabitants—in a word, something

fabulous, something colossal and unprecedented, with public establishments commensurate with its population.

“HUMANITARIAN AND GENEROUS IDEAS”

{341} [Reply to the Legislative Body, 1805] I want to find my glory and my happiness in the happiness of the present generation. Within the limits of my influence, I want our century to be characterized by humanitarian and generous ideas.

[Conversation, 1816, related by Las Cases] In his scheme and plans [said the Emperor], military conscription, far from obstructing education, would have become an educational tool. Eventually, he said, each regiment would have had a school in which all subjects were taught—elementary and advanced courses, in the scientific line as well as in the liberal arts and in simple mechanics. “Nothing would have been easier than to put all this into practice,” he remarked. “Once the principle was adopted, it would have been possible for each regiment to find all the necessary specialized personnel within its own ranks.”

[Same conversation] Then the Emperor passed on to the parish priests, who according to his plans were to play a most important and useful role. “The better educated they are,” he said, “the less they will be inclined to abuse their ministry.” Thus he wanted their theological studies to be supplemented by courses in scientific farming, elementary medicine, and law. “In that manner,” he said, “by insensible degrees, dogma and controversy, which are merely the battle horses and weapons of fools and fanatics, would have become less often heard from the pulpits, and nothing would have been left but pure morality, which is always beautiful, always eloquent, always persuasive, always listened to. And, since men like to display their knowledge, these ministers of a purely charitable religion

would have preferred to speak to the peasants about their crops, their labors, their fields. The priests would have been in a position to assist them with useful legal or medical advice. Everybody would have gained by it."

[Same conversation] "I wanted to make it a law that only those lawyers and attorneys should receive fees who had won their cases. How much litigation would have been prevented by such a measure! For it is quite obvious that there is not a lawyer who, after a first look at the case, would not turn it down if it seemed doubtful. It need not be feared that a man who earns his living from his work might take on a case for the simple pleasure of hearing himself talk; yet even if he did, he would harm no one but himself. But with the practitioners of the law," the Emperor observed, "the simplest things straight away become complicated. They cited all sorts of objections and disadvantages, and since I had no time to waste I deferred my plan. But I am convinced to this day that the idea is brilliant."

[Recollection of Las Cases] I also recall hearing him suggest [at the Conseil d'état] that all public officials and employees, even the military, should create their own future pension funds. This would be done by withholding a small part of their annual salary. He attached great importance to this. "In that manner," he said, "everybody's future security will no longer depend on solicitations and favors: it will be a right, a true form of property...The objection was made that the salaries, especially those of the military, were too small to admit of deduction. "Well, in that case, I shall pay the difference," replied the Emperor. "I shall contribute as much as has been withheld."—"But what is the good of it, in that case?" it was further objected. "If the government must make the same expenditure either way, there is no economy. What advantages are there, then?"—"The advantages," replied the Emperor, "consist in the difference between certainty and uncertainty. The Treasury would no longer be troubled by

having to take care of these incidental expenditures, and the citizens would enjoy the security of a guaranteed future.”

PROPHECIES

{342} [Conversation, 1816, reported in English] Ere twenty years have elapsed, when I am dead and buried, you will witness another revolution in France.

[Conversation, 1816] We [the French], among the nations of Europe, are the most likely to prolong our mutations.

{343} [Conversation, 1816] Soon the same [revolutionary] fury will spread [from France] to all of Europe. There will be only two opposing parties left in Europe; men will no longer be divided into nations and states but into parties and opinions. And who can foresee the crises, the duration, and the details of so many storms! For as to the ultimate outcome, it cannot be in doubt: enlightenment and time cannot be turned back.

{344} [Conversation, 1816, paraphrased by Las Cases] The Emperor said that, in recent years, France had succeeded in producing beet sugar of the same quality and price as cane sugar....He added that the same was true of nearly all colonial imports....This led him to the conclusion that just as the discovery of the compass was the cause of a commercial revolution, the progress of chemistry was bound to bring about a counter-revolution.

{345} [Conversation, December 1812, paraphrased by Caulaincourt] The Emperor held that the secession of these colonies [Mexico, Venezuela, New Granada, Chile, Argentina, etc.] was a major event that would change global politics, strengthen the policies of the United States, and, within ten years, threaten the power of England—all of which was a compensation [for the losses to Napoleonic Spain], He had no doubt that Mexico and all the other

large overseas colonies of Spain were about to proclaim their independence and form one or several states under a constitution that would make them inclined to act as auxiliaries of the United States, as their best interests demanded.

“It is the beginning of a new era,” he said. “It will bring about the independence of all colonies.”

{346} [Conversation, 1816] The colonial system such as we have known it is finished for everybody—for England, who owns all the colonies, as for the other powers, who have none left. England’s mastery of the seas is no longer questioned. Then why, in these new circumstances, should she continue in her old routine, instead of creating a more advantageous political combination? England ought to anticipate a kind of emancipation of her colonies, for she is bound to lose a large number of them in time, and it is up to her to take advantage of the present in order to make sure of securing new ties and more favorable relationships with them. Why not induce the greater number of these colonies to buy their independence by assuming a share of the public debt? The metropolis thus would bear a lighter burden without losing any of her advantages. She would keep her ties [with the emancipated colonies] in the form of treaties loyally observed, of reciprocal interests, similarity of language, and the force of habit....What would she lose? Nothing. She would spare herself the trouble and expense of an administration which only too often earns her nothing but hatred. It is true that the cabinet ministers would have fewer jobs to hand out, but the nation would certainly benefit more.

I am certain that, no matter how defective these raw ideas may be as I am improvising them now, it would be possible to turn them to good advantage by applying to them a thorough knowledge of the facts. Even

India could, no doubt, be put to good use by means of some new combinations.

{347} [Conversation, 1817, reported in English] If I were an Englishman, I should esteem the man who advised a war with China to be the greatest living enemy of my country. You would be beaten in the end, and perhaps a revolution in India would follow.

{348} [Conversation with Lucien, 1803] Our land armies have been and will continue to be able to win over all European armies. But as far as the sea is concerned, my dear fellow, you know only too well that we and all the other nations of the Continent must lower our flags. America, perhaps, some day—I don't say it's impossible....

[Conversation, 1812] The English will end up by agreeing to everything the United States wants, and the American government, if entrusted to clever men, to real statesmen, will come out of it [the war] much invigorated. It will take advantage of the opportunity to be granted the means by which it can organize and maintain a larger military establishment, form the core of a permanent army, and obtain better facilities for concentrating and training militia units. If the Americans act wisely, they will build forts and even fortresses at strategic locations, which would be very useful to them in the future....The United States will become England's most powerful adversary and will make her tremble before thirty years from now.{349}

[From Dr. O'Meara's diary] April 23, 1817. Gave him two or three newspapers. He repeated his disbelief of the rumor of war being likely to take place between Russia and America, as it was contrary to the interest of both.

April 24, 1817. Told him that a report had arrived in the island [Saint

Helena] of war having been declared between Spain and America, and Russia and America. “Russia and America?” said he. “Impossible. If it takes place I shall never again be astonished at anything.”

[Conversation, 1817] Russia will become the ruler of the world.

{350} [Conversation, 1816, on the Holy Alliance, but of wider application] I cannot guess either its meaning or its purpose....Is it intended to guarantee the effectiveness of a general peace? But this is an illusion, and the foreign ministers could not possibly be its dupes. There can be no alliances unless they oppose and balance one another. There cannot be an alliance of everybody with everybody—it would become meaningless.

A POLITICAL TESTAMENT

{351} [Deathbed statement, recorded by Montholon on April 17, 1821] The Emperor spent a quiet night, although he perspired abundantly. About three o'clock, he had me called. When I arrived, he was sitting up, and the brilliance of his eyes made me fear that this fever had increased. Noticing my concern, he said to me in a kindly voice:

“I am not worse, but I have become preoccupied, while talking with Bertrand, about what the executors of my will are to say to my son when they see him. Bertrand doesn’t understand me. He and Lafayette are still exactly as they were in 1791, with their utopias, their English notions, their bills of grievances and States-General. All they see in the Revolution of 1789 is a mere reform of abuses, and they refuse to admit that it constituted, all in itself, a complete social rebirth.

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“There is nothing worse than decent people in a political crisis when their consciences are under the spell of false ideas. You will understand me:

all you need do is remember the things I have dictated to you on the aims of my reign. But all this may be scattered here and there in your memory when the time comes for you to speak of it. I had better sum up in a few words the advice I leave to my son, so that you can explain my thought to him in detail. Write:

"'My son must have no thought of avenging my death: he must take advantage of it. Let him never forget my accomplishments; let him forever remain, as I have been, French to the finger tips. All his efforts must tend to a reign of peace. If, merely to imitate me and without an absolute necessity, he wants to resume my wars, he would be a mere ape. To do my labors over again would mean that I have accomplished nothing. To complete my work, on the other hand, would be to demonstrate the firmness of its foundations and to make intelligible the ground plan of the edifice that I had merely sketched. One cannot do the same thing twice in a century. I have been obliged to subdue Europe by force; today, Europe must be persuaded. I have saved the Revolution, which was on the point of death; I have washed off its crimes, I have held it up to the eyes of Europe resplendent with glory. I have implanted new ideas in the soil of France and Europe: their march cannot be reversed. Let my son reap the fruit of my seed. Let him develop all the elements of prosperity contained in the soil of France—at that price, he may yet become a great ruler.

"'The Bourbons will not last. When I am dead, there will be a universal reaction in my favor, even in England. That is a fine inheritance for my son. It is possible that, in order to wipe out the memory of their persecutions, the English will favor the return of my son to France. But in order to live on good terms with England, it is necessary at all costs to favor her commercial interests. This necessity entails two consequences: either fight England or share the world with her. The second alternative is the only possible one in

our day.

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“‘France is the one country in which the leaders exercise the least influence; to lean on them is to build on quicksand. Nothing great can be accomplished in France except by leaning on the masses. Besides, a government must look for support where it can find it. There are moral laws that are as inflexible and imperious as physical laws. The Bourbons cannot find support except in the nobles and the priests, no matter what constitution they may be forced to adopt, just as water must find its level despite the pump that has temporarily lifted it. As for me, I always leaned on everybody without exception; I gave the first example of a government favoring the interests of all. I did not govern for or through the nobles, the priests, the bourgeoisie, or the workers. I have governed for the entire community, for the whole great French family. To keep a nation’s interests divided is a disservice to all classes and gives rise to civil war. What nature has made one cannot be divided but only mutilated.

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“‘In my youth, I had illusions. I got rid of them fast. The great orators who dominate political assemblies by the glitter of their words are generally the most mediocre statesmen. You must not fight them with words—they usually command a still more sonorous vocabulary than your own—you must counter their fluency with closely reasoned logic. Their strength consists in vagueness; you must lead them back to the reality of facts. Practice kills them. In the Conseil d'état there were men far more eloquent than I, but I regularly defeated them with this simple argument: Two and two is four.

“‘France is swarming with highly capable and practical-minded men.

The difficulty lies merely in finding them and giving them a chance to pursue their careers. There are men behind ploughs who should be in the Conseil d'état, and there are ministers who ought to be behind a plough.

"'My son should never be surprised at seeing the most reasonable-looking men suggest the most absurd plans, from agrarian reform to Oriental despotism. All systems have their apologists in France. Let him listen to everything, but also let him evaluate everything according to its true merit, and let him surround himself with all the true talents produced by the nation. The French people has two equally powerful passions which seem opposed to each other but which in fact derive from the same sentiment—love of equality and love of distinctions. A government cannot satisfy those two needs except by being exceedingly just. In its laws and its actions, the government must be the same for all; honors and rewards must be given to those men who, in the eyes of the government, are most worthy of them.

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"'My son will have to reign with a free press. In our day, this is a necessity. In order to govern, the question is not to follow out a more or less valid theory but to build with whatever materials are at hand. The inevitable must be accepted and turned to advantage.

"'In the hands of the government, a free press may become a powerful ally by carrying sound principles and doctrines to the remotest corners of the Empire. To leave it to its own devices is to sleep next to a powder keg.

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"'…Our enemies are the enemies of mankind. They want to put chains around the people, whom they regard as a herd. They want to oppress France and to make the river flow back to its source: let them beware lest it

overflow! Under my son the conflicting interests can coexist in peace, and the new ideas can spread and grow in strength without hurt and without victims. Humanity would be spared incalculable misfortunes. But if the blind hatred of the kings pursues my blood after my death, I shall be avenged nonetheless—but cruelly avenged.

"'Civilization will be the loser in any case. If the people break their chains, Europe will be flooded with blood; civilization will disappear amid civil and foreign wars. It will take more than three hundred years to destroy, in Europe, that royal authority which only yesterday still represented the common interest but which required several centuries to emerge from the grip of the Middle Ages. If, on the other hand, the North [i.e., Russia] should march against civilization, the struggle will be less long but the blows will be more fatal. The welfare of the people, all the achievements of so many years, will be lost, and no one can foresee what may be the disastrous consequences.

"'The restoration of my son is in the interest of the people as well as of the kings. Outside the ideas and principles for which we have fought and which I made triumph I see nothing but slavery or confusion for France and Europe alike.

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"'Europe is marching toward an inevitable change. To retard her march is to waste strength in a futile struggle. To favor it is to strengthen the hopes and aspirations of all.

"'There are national aspirations that must be satisfied sooner or later, and toward this aim we must march....The serious questions will no longer be resolved in the North but in the Mediterranean: there is enough on its shores to satisfy the ambitions of all the powers, and with the shreds of uncivilized

countries the happiness of the civilized nations can be bought. If only the kings would see the light, there would no longer be in Europe any cause for hatred among nations.

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“‘In order to know whether his administration is good or bad, whether his laws are in harmony with custom, my son should ask for a yearly report on the number of sentences passed by the tribunals, together with their motivations. If crimes and misdemeanors increase, this is proof that misery is on the rise and that society is badly governed. Their decrease is proof of the contrary.

“‘Religious ideas have a more powerful influence than is thought by certain shortsighted philosophers; they can render great service to humanity. By being on good terms with the pope, it is possible even today to dominate the consciences of a hundred million men.

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“‘My son should read much history and meditate upon it: it is the only true philosophy. Let him read and meditate upon the wars of the great captains: it is the only way to learn the art of war.

“‘Yet no matter what you say to him, no matter what he learns, he will profit little from it if in his innermost heart he lacks that sacred flame, that love of the good which alone inspires great deeds.’”

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THE TYRANT SPEAKS

From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step.

Power is never ridiculous.

From triumph to fall there is but one step.

“POWER IS MY MISTRESS”

{352} [Conversation with Rœderer, 1804, on Joseph’s ambition to be designated heir apparent to the throne] Nothing can wipe this from my memory. It was as if he [Joseph] had told a passionate lover that he had slept with his mistress, or at least that he had hopes of doing so....Power is my mistress. I have worked too hard at her conquest to allow anyone to take her away from me or even covet her. Although you say that power came to me of its own accord, I know what it has cost me—the sufferings, the sleepless nights, the scheming. Two weeks ago, I would not have dreamed of treating him [Joseph] unjustly. Now I am unforgiving. I shall smile at him with my lips—but he has slept with my mistress.

[Conversation, 1809] I have only one passion, only one mistress, and that is France: I sleep with her. She has never failed me, she has lavished her blood and her treasures on me. If I need five hundred thousand men, she gives them to me.

[Conversation, Saint Helena, when asked how he could remember the regimental numbers of his army in Egypt] Madam, a lover’s memory of his former mistresses.

CALCULATED RAGES

{353} [Conversation, 1809; the additions in italics are in Rœderer’s

account] *Napoleon:* Have you read his [Joseph's] letter to his wife?

Rœderer: No, Your Majesty.

Napoleon: He knew perfectly well it would be opened. It's full of insults directed at me. He says in it that he wants to go to Morfontaine [Joseph's estate near Paris] rather than stay in a country that has been bought at the price of blood shed in an unjust cause. It's a phrase you might find in an English pamphlet. Is it up to him to write to me the way the English talk? And what's Morfontaine, after all? It was bought with the blood I shed in Italy. Did he inherit the place from his father? Did he work for it? He got it from me. Yes, I have shed blood, but the blood of my enemies, of the enemies of France. Has he the right to speak their language? Does he want to imitate Talleyrand? I have showered him with honors, wealth, diamonds. He has made use of all these against me. He has betrayed me as much as he could and at the first opportunity. While I was away (*during the campaign in Spain)* he said that he had implored me on his knees to prevent the Spanish business—and for two years he had pestered me and urged me to undertake it. He maintained that twenty thousand men would be enough; he gave me twenty memoranda to prove it. He behaved exactly the same way in the affair of the due d'Enghien; I didn't know that, but Talleyrand told me. (*The Emperor keeps pronouncing Taillerand.)* I didn't know where he [the due d'Enghien] was. (*The Emperor stops in front of me.)* It was he [Joseph] who informed me of the place where he was, and after advising his execution he kept wailing about it to all his acquaintances. (*The Emperor begins walking up and down again and after a moment's silence continues in a calmer tone of voice:)* I shall not harm him in any way; I shall maintain him in all his positions; I even have the same feelings for him that I used to have—but I have withdrawn his privilege of entering my study at any hour of the day. Never again will he obtain a private audience with me. He will

no longer be able to say that he has advised me in favor of or against this or that. If he is king of Spain, it's because he wanted to be. If he had wanted to stay in Naples, he could have stayed. I am putting my best troops at his disposal; what is he complaining about? He thinks he is hindering me; he's quite mistaken. Nothing will stop me. My designs will be accomplished. I possess the necessary will and strength. Nothing hinders me. I don't need my family. If they are not Frenchmen, if their soul is not French, I have no family. At Boulogne I cast Lucien from me, because he dared speak to me like a man who wasn't a Frenchman. They aren't French; only I am. When I offered to make him king of Italy, he didn't want it. In his place I nominated a young man, a beardless child [Eugène Beauharnais], but that child turned out to be so perfect that he even approved of my divorcing Josephine [Eugène's mother] when the question came up, because he had a sense of political necessity. He [Joseph] will make me do things of which I wouldn't have thought a year ago. If need be, I shall adopt a general and send him to Spain [to be viceroy]. I'll adopt Bernadotte, just as I have adopted Murat. When the king says he'll go back to Morfontaine, does he imagine I'll allow him to come? As soon as he declares himself my enemy, I shall treat him as an enemy. He is quite incapable of living in retirement. He thinks he's capable of living at Morfontaine: he's flattering himself.

Rœderer: The king [Joseph] has acquired the habit of power as well as a liking for it—and, I believe, to say so is to praise him, for the first quality a ruler must have is to love power. At Naples, the king made his power feared and respected. All his ministers feared him, and I more than anybody. I was convinced that if the occasion arose I would be treated less indulgently by the king than I had been by Your Majesty.

Napoleon: I too love power—but I love it as an artist. I love it as a musician loves his violin.

Rœderer: If he plays it well.

Napoleon: I love it for the sake of drawing sounds, chords, and harmonies from it. The king of Holland [Louis] also keeps talking about retiring into private life. Of us three, the one most capable of living at Morfontaine is I. There are two distinct persons in me—thinking man and feeling man. In my family circle, I am the feeling man: I play with the children, I chat with my wife, I read aloud to them from novels. (*The Emperor walks on in silence for a while.)* I want you to see the letter he wrote me. *(He opens the door which leads to his study and says to an usher:)* Call Monsieur Méneval [his secretary], *(He closes the door. A moment later the usher knocks at the door.*) Come in.

The Usher: Sire, Monsieur Méneval is not there.

Napoleon: Find him. (*Monsieur Méneval knocks at the door and enters a moment later.)* Give me the letter from the king of Spain, the big letter, you know. Bring also my own letter to him which preceded it and my answer to the king of Spain. (Exit *Méneval.)* You will be surprised at the way the king writes to me. It's full of threats, insults—(*Monsieur Méneval brings the letters. The Emperor puts them on a chair.)*

Rœderer: Sire, it seems to me that Your Majesty could put an immediate end to the misunderstandings that have caused these mutual reproaches. The king, it would seem, always invokes the Treaty of Bayonne [which made him king], while Your Majesty bases himself on the right of conquest, since it was necessary for Your Majesty to conquer Spain in order to make good the gift. Your Majesty now can impose whatever conditions he deems most convenient. Your Majesty has but to prescribe them, and the king—

Napoleon: I impose no other condition upon him but the one that he shouldn't write to me the way he writes. Read his letters. *(The Emperor*

hands me the three letters—his own to the king, the king's reply, and the Emperor's reply to the king.) Read all three of them aloud.{354}

(The following is the substance of the Emperor's letter as I recall it:)

Rœderer: "I have received your letters Nos. * * *. I do not approve of your having enlisted the Spanish prisoners of war sent you by Marshal Victor. The measure is imprudent and premature. Nor should you have amnestied the members of the Castilian junta. Those people needed a stay of four or five years in France so as to get rid of their ideas and acquire sounder ones."

Napoleon: What I foresaw has happened: half of those regiments have deserted and have begun to loot and kill. It's not pleasant for a general who has taken prisoners and sent them to the rear to see them return to fight him and massacre his soldiers. The king does not approve of my taking care of the security of my troops. Read the king's letter.

Rœderer: "Sire, I have received your dispatch dated * * *. I see with regret that everything I do earns me your displeasure. I am here without money, without aid. My guard has not received a penny since leaving Naples. Instead of the comfort and encouragement I need, I meet nothing but unpleasantness. My conduct is blamed as too indulgent by people who would be covered with ignominy if I employed against them the severity they want to impose on me."

Napoleon: Why doesn't he punish disorder? Why doesn't he repress it? He is my representative.—Go on.

Rœderer (reading): "Your Majesty has ordered me to put twelve estates under sequestration; the order has been extended to more than twice that many."

Napoleon: That's Fréville's{355} business. It's ridiculous how he hates Fréville. If Fréville has exceeded my orders, hasn't he [Joseph] as much authority over him, being my representative, as over the generals?—Go on.

Rœderer (reading): "There is not a private house in Madrid that isn't either occupied or sealed by Your Majesty's orders. Five or six thousand domestics are unemployed and reduced to begging or stealing."

Napoleon: Why doesn't he call Monsieur Fréville to account? Have I ordered or authorized all this? He is making me responsible for things I never heard of.—Go on.

Rœderer: "A letter has been communicated to me which orders Monsieur Hervas{356} to spy on all my actions and to report them to Marshal Duroc."

Napoleon: I suppose Duroc gave orders to be informed of anything touching my army. What do I care about the king's private conduct! Did I ever know what he was doing in Naples, in private life? Whatever I learned about it was from his own mouth, in Venice. It's through him I knew he was living with Mme * * *, by whom he had two children.—Go on.

Rœderer: "Sire, I am in a most unpleasant position, without money, without revenues—"

Napoleon: He complains he has no money! Why hasn't he any? There is plenty of it in Spain. I got a billion out of Prussia. It wouldn't have been so difficult to get two billions out of Spain.—Go on.

Rœderer: "I work from six in the morning to eleven at night. If I must be humiliated even in my own capital, if there is a person whom you esteem more than or as much as you do me, then let that person be king of Spain. I cannot accomplish anything if I lack your confidence. If I have not your entire confidence, I request leave to retire to Morfontaine and to lead the

life of a simple private citizen. There I shall be able to live without remorse and with my conscience at rest."

Napoleon: Certainly there are people whom I esteem as much and more than him! It isn't because I esteem him that I decided to put him on the throne. If I handed out crowns according to merit, I would have chosen different men. I made him king because I needed my family to consolidate my dynasty; I made him king because that was part of my system. He has no military ability; what he writes to me about Marshal Lannes proves it once more. Lannes asked him for troop reinforcements, and immediately he sent him two regiments of dragoons—assuming, he said, that since it was Marshal Lannes who asked for them, they were really needed. Fine reasoning! He doesn't know that all generals—and Lannes more than the others, despite his outstanding bravery—always want to have more troops. Generals see only their own mission, their own army; they would like to collect all the troops of the country. To be sure, the two regiments may very well have been necessary to Lannes: I am criticizing the king merely for the reason that made him send them. The head of an army must calculate the needs of all his generals on the basis of their positions and circumstances and not let their requests determine his decisions....Continue the letter.

Rœderer: "There [at Morfontaine] I shall be able to live without remorse __"

Napoleon: That's an insult to me. He means to say that I should feel remorse. He wants to reproach me for the blood I have shed. Yes, I have shed blood, but my enemies' blood. He's speaking here like the English pamphlets. Is it up to him to talk to me like that? Did I force him to be king of Spain? Didn't I leave him free to stay on in Naples?—Keep going.

Rœderer: "Sire, I have reached an age at which all illusions have been

dispelled. You still keep a little of your old friendship for me. If you do not regard me as your best, perhaps your only friend—”

Napoleon: What cheek! “Your best friend,” maybe—but “your only friend”! It’s an insult. I don’t accept the favor he’s bestowing on me, of being alone in loving me. I want five hundred million men for friends. And why does he always talk to me about his friendship? These nursemaid phrases have no business in our relationship. Friendship must show itself in deeds and services. My friends are those who serve me.—Go on.

Rœderer: “I cannot stay at a post in which I no longer enjoy your confidence, or am risking its loss, and remain here to be made a fool of. I am respectfully your affectionate brother.”

Napoleon: Read my reply.

Rœderer: “I have received your letter No. * * *. I do not see what gave rise to the complaints it contains. I thought that it was more prudent to delay the incorporation of the prisoners and the amnesty of the junta. I hope that the future will give you no cause to regret not having thought as I did.”

Napoleon: My reply, I think, is rather moderate)

The following conversation took place on December 30, 1807, at Chambéry in Savoy, between Auguste de Staël and Napoleon. Young Auguste had come to petition the Emperor in behalf of his mother, the celebrated Mme de Staël. Her objective was twofold: to have her exile from Paris rescinded and to obtain reimbursement for the two million francs which her father, Jacques Necker, had lent the French treasury before his dismissal from the cabinet in 1790. It is curious to note that, like Marie Antoinette, Napoleon held Necker responsible for the French Revolution to a still greater degree than the Jacobins. The conversation is reproduced here

as related in Bourrienne's memoirs; Bourrienne used the account of an eyewitness, Duroc. The passages in italics are condensed from Bourrienne.

{357} *Napoleon:* Your grandfather [Necker] was an ideologist, a madman, a senile maniac. At the age of sixty, he wanted to overthrow my constitution and dabble in constitutional projects.{358} It would be a nice state of affairs indeed if countries were governed by system mongers and theory makers who judge men from books and the world from a map!

De Staël: Sire, since the projects my grandfather proposed are merely vain theories in the eyes of Your Majesty, I do not understand why Your Majesty is so exercised on their account. Every economist has written projects for a constitution.

Napoleon: Yes, I should think so! Economists! They are empty dreamers who think up financial systems and who are not fit to be tax collectors in the least village of my Empire. Your grandfather's book is the work of a stubborn old man who on his deathbed still kept twaddling about the government of nations.

De Staël: Sire, from the manner in which Your Majesty speaks of the book, I may perhaps be excused for thinking that Your Majesty has been informed by ill-intentioned people and has not read it.

Napoleon: That's where you're wrong. I've read it myself from cover to cover.

De Staël: Then Your Majesty must have seen how much tribute my grandfather rendered to Your Majesty's genius.

Napoleon: Yes! Some tribute! He called me the "necessary man"! The necessary man! And, to listen to him, the first thing that ought to have been done was to cut the throat of the necessary man. Yes, I was necessary,

indispensable, in order to repair all the stupidities of your grandfather, to root out all the evil he had done to France. It was he who overthrew the monarchy and led Louis XVI to the scaffold.

De Staël: Sire, you cannot help knowing that it was because he defended the king that my grandfather's property was confiscated.

Napoleon: Defended the king! A fine defense, by God! Monsieur de Staël! If I gave a man poison, and then, when he was in his agony, I brought him the antidote, would you say that I wanted to save that man? Well, that's how your grandfather defended Louis XVI. As for the confiscated property you mention, what does that prove? Nothing. Robespierre's property was confiscated too. Yes, I'm telling you, even Robespierre, Marat, Danton have done less harm to France than Monsieur Necker. It's he who made the Revolution. You were too young then. Well, I was there. I saw what the Reign of Terror was like, and the public calamities of the times. But so long as I live, these times won't come back, you may take my word for it. Your planners are putting utopias on paper. There are imbeciles who read those daydreams; they are circulated, they are believed, everybody talks about universal welfare. Then comes a famine, the people rise in rebellion, and there you have the fruit of your fine theories! It's your grandfather who was the cause of the Saturnalia that devastated France. All the blood that has been shed in the Revolution is on his hands.

De Staël (mastering his emotion): Sire, allow me to hope that posterity will judge my grandfather more favorably than does Your Majesty. During his administration he was compared to Sully and Colbert, and I repeat to Your Majesty that in my opinion posterity will speak more justly of him.

Napoleon: Yes, yes—posterity! Maybe it won't speak about him at all.

De Staël: I dare hope the contrary, Sire.

Napoleon (turning toward his staff and smiling): In the last analysis, gentlemen, it isn't really up to me to speak ill of the Revolution, since I ended up by snatching the throne. (*To De Staël)*: The reign of the troublemakers is finished. What I want is subordination. Respect authority, because it comes from God. You are young and well brought up. Follow a better road, get yourself used to subordination. Don't follow those evil principles which, for the sake of idle talking, compromise the very existence of society.

De Staël: Sire, since it is my good fortune that Your Majesty does me the honor of finding me well brought up, Your Majesty must not condemn the principles of my grandfather and my mother, for it was with their principles that I was raised.

Napoleon: Well, I'm advising you to keep straight in politics, for I shall not forgive the least thing to anyone connected with Monsieur Necker. Everybody must keep straight in politics.

(*This entire conversation took place while Napoleon and his staff were at table. At the words, "Everybody must keep straight in politics," the Emperor rose, while Monsieur de Staël still insisted on obtaining the repeal of his mother's exile. Without replying to his renewed pleas, the Emperor stepped up to him and took him by the ear.)*

Napoleon: You are very young. If you had my age and experience, you would judge things better. Far from offending me, your frankness has pleased me. I like a son who pleads his mother's cause. Your mother has sent you on a difficult errand, and you have acquitted yourself intelligently. I am glad to have talked with you; I like young people when they are simple and not too argumentative. Despite all this, I don't want to give you any false hopes, and I cannot help telling you that you will obtain nothing.

Murat has already spoken to me on that matter, and I told him, as I am telling you now, that my will is unshakable. If your mother were in prison, I shouldn't hesitate to grant you her pardon—but she's in exile, and nothing will make me call her back.

De Staël: But, Your Majesty, is not exile from one's fatherland and friends as painful as prison?

Napoleon: Romantic notions, all this: you must have picked that up from your mother. She's much to be pitied indeed! Except for Paris, all Europe is her prison.

De Staël: But, Sire, her friends are all in Paris.

Napoleon: With her clever mind, she'll be able to make friends elsewhere. Besides, I cannot understand why she is so intent on coming to Paris. Why is she so eager to place herself within immediate reach of my tyranny? You see, I'm not afraid of the word. Truth to tell, I don't understand her. Can't she go to Rome, to Berlin, to Vienna, to Milan, to London? That's it—let her go to London. She can write pamphlets against me there, if she wants to. I shall be glad if she goes to any of those places, but Paris—don't you see, Monsieur de Staël?—Paris is the place where I have my residence, and I don't want anybody there who doesn't like me. This goes for everyone who knows what's good for him....Your mother would promise miracles, but she won't be able to keep from talking politics.

De Staël: But, Sire, Your Majesty may rest assured that my mother is no longer interested in politics; her inclinations are entirely to her friends and to literature.

Napoleon: That's what it is! Literature, is it? I won't be taken in by this. You can make politics by talking literature, morality, arts, anything. Women

should be knitting....

[The conversation proceeded much on the same tone for several more minutes until the Emperor dismissed his petitioner with these gracious words:] I don't advise you at all [to settle in France], Go to England. There they love the Genevese, the quibblers and drawing-room politicians. Go to England, for I am warning you that in France I'll be against you rather than for you.

(After this conversation, the Emperor without a word entered his coach and remained sunk in thought for several miles. When he broke his silence, he said to Duroc:) Wasn't I a little hard on that young man?...I'm afraid I was. Well, I'm glad of it, all things considered. Others won't try it again. Those people disparage everything I do. They don't understand me.

"CHARLATANISM, BUT OF THE HIGHEST SORT"

{359} [Proclamation to the people of Alexandria, July 2, 1798] Thrice blessed those who side with us! Blessed those who remain neutral, for in time they shall come to know us! Woe to the madmen who take up arms against us, for they shall perish!

[Proclamation, Cairo, December 21, 1798] Sherifs, ulemas, preachers in the mosques, be sure to tell the people that those who, with a light heart, take sides against us shall find no refuge in either this world or the next. Is there a man so blind as not to see that destiny itself guides all my operations? Is there anyone so unbelieving as to doubt whether everything in this vast universe is subject to the dictates of destiny?

Let the people know that, from the creation of the world, it is written that after destroying the enemies of Islam and beating down the crosses, I was to come from the confines of the Occident to accomplish my appointed task.

Show the people that in more than twenty passages of the holy Koran what has happened has been foretold and what shall happen has been explained.

Those whom only the fear of our arms prevents from cursing us—let them mend their ways. For in calling to Heaven against us, they ask their own damnation. Let the true believers make vows for the success of our arms.

If I chose, I could call each of you to account for the most hidden feelings of his heart, for I know everything, even what you have told to no one. But the day will come when all men shall see beyond all doubt that I am guided by orders from above and all human efforts avail nought against me. Blessed are they who, in good faith, are the first to choose my side!

[Conversation, 1800] The truly happy man is he who hides from me in a remote province—and when I die, the universe will heave a great sigh of relief.

[Conversation, 1816, on his proclamations in Egypt] It was charlatanism, but of the highest sort.

{360} [Speech to the upper house, 19 Brumaire Year VIII/ November 10, 1799] Remember that the god of war and the god of success are marching alongside me.

[Remark to his friends, November 11, 1799, on the preceding sentence] I had got too hot, and I ended up with a bad phrase. The French have an instinct for what is proper: no sooner had I said those words than a general murmur made me aware of it. But how can it be helped? They spoiled me along the way; they repeated these words so often to me all the way from Marseilles to Paris that the phrase stuck.

SELF-APOTHEOSIS

{361} [Conversation, 1800s] As soon as a man becomes a king, he is set apart from all other men. I always felt that Alexander the Great's idea of pretending to be descended from a god was inspired by a sure instinct for real politics.

[Letter, 1808, to Admiral Decrès] You may also dispense with comparing me to God. I am willing to believe that you wrote this without thinking; the phrase is so singularly lacking in respect to me.

[Proclamation to the Spanish people, 1808] God has given me the necessary strength and will to overcome all obstacles.

[Letter, 1809] The Austrian army has been struck by the fire of Heaven, which punishes the thankless, the unrighteous, and the perfidious; it has been pulverized.

[Conversation, 1816, on his plans after the annexation of the Papal States in 1809] Thus I had at last achieved the long-desired separation between temporal and spiritual power....Thenceforth, I was in a position to exalt the pope beyond all bounds and to surround him with such pomp and ceremony that he would have ceased to regret the loss of his temporal power. I would have made an idol of him. He would have resided near me; Paris would have become the capital of Christendom, and I would have become the master of the religious as well as of the political world....I would have called religious as well as legislative bodies into session; my church councils would have been representative of all Christendom, and the popes would have been mere chairmen. I would have opened and closed these assemblies, approved and made public their decisions, as did Constantine and Charlemagne.

[Conversation, 1817] *Gourgaud:* In China, the sovereign is adored like a god.

Napoleon: That is as it ought to be!

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NAPOLEON SURVEYS HIS CAREER

Greatness has its beauties, but only in retrospect and in the imagination.

We look at all things through a gilded veil that makes them appear glittering and gay. Little by little, the veil thickens until the point is reached when it becomes almost black.

ON HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

{362} [Anecdote related by Bourrienne] One day [during the Consulate] Bonaparte was taking a walk with Mme de Clermont-Tonnerre...whose charming conversation gave him great pleasure. Suddenly he interrupted her brusquely and said, “Madame de Clermont-Tonnerre, what do you think of me?” It was a difficult and delicate matter to reply to so sudden an apostrophe. “Why, general,” she said after a moment’s hesitation, “I think you are like a clever architect who does not want anyone to see the monument he is building until it is completely finished. You are building behind a scaffolding that you will take down when you have finished.”—”Yes, Madam, that’s exactly so,” Bonaparte said with incredible vivacity. “You are right!...I always live two years ahead of the present.”

{363} [Conversation, 1816] I have closed the gaping abyss of anarchy, and I have unscrambled chaos. I have cleansed the Revolution, ennobled the common people, and restored the authority of kings. I have stirred all men to competition, I have rewarded merit wherever I found it, I have pushed back the boundaries of greatness. All this, you must admit, is something. Is there any point on which I could be attacked and on which a historian could not take up my defense? My intentions, perhaps? He has evidence enough to clear me. My despotism? He can prove that dictatorship was absolutely necessary. Will it be said that I restricted freedom? He will be able to prove

that licence, anarchy, and general disorder were still on our doorstep. Shall I be accused of having loved war too much? He will show that I was always on the defensive. That I wanted to set up a universal monarchy? He will explain that it was merely the fortuitous result of circumstances and that I was led to it step by step by our very enemies. My ambition? Ah, no doubt he will find that I had ambition, a great deal of it—but the grandest and noblest, perhaps, that ever was: the ambition of establishing and consecrating at last the kingdom of reason and the full exercise, the complete enjoyment, of all human capabilities! And in this respect the historian will perhaps find himself forced to regret that such an ambition has not been fulfilled, has not been satisfied. [After a silence the Emperor added:] And yet, my dear Las Cases, these few words hold my whole history.

{364} [Conversation, 1816] Everybody has loved me and hated me; everybody has taken me up, dropped me, and taken me up again....Only this was not all at the same time but at intervals and at various periods. I was like the sun, which crosses the equator as it describes the ecliptic: as soon as I entered each man’s clime, I kindled every hope, I was blessed, I was adored; but as soon as I left it, I no longer was understood and contrary sentiments replaced the old ones.

[Conversation, 1816] It is a fact that my destiny is the inverse of other men’s. Ordinarily, a man is lowered by his downfall; my downfall raises me to infinite heights. Every day strips me of my tyrant’s skin, of my murderousness and ferocity.

[Conversation, 1816] I believe that nature has intended me for great reverses. My soul is made of marble; lightning has found no grip on it and had to slide off it.

[Conversation, 1816, on his detractors] I am destined to be their prey, but I have no fear of becoming their victim. They will be biting into granite....The memory I leave behind consists of facts that mere words cannot destroy....I shall survive—and whenever they want to strike a lofty attitude, they will praise me.

[Conversation, 1820] Many faults, no doubt, will be found in my career; but Arcole, Rivoli, the Pyramids, Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland—these are granite: the tooth of envy is powerless here.

{365} [Conversation, 1815] I had a taste for founding, not for owning.

English newspapers in 1816 were full of hints that Napoleon had cached away a huge fortune. After reading one of these articles, Napoleon dictated the following reply. To correct its statements would be to quibble.

You wish to know Napoleon’s treasures? They are immense, you are right, but they are in the open for everyone to see. Here is their list: the great basins of Antwerp and Flushing, which are capable of accommodating whole fleets and of sheltering them when the sea freezes over; the hydraulic installations at Dunkirk, Le Havre, and Nice; the gigantic basin of Cherbourg; the naval installations at Venice; the fine roads from Antwerp to Amsterdam, from Mainz to Metz, from Bordeaux to Bayonne; the carriage roads over the Simplon, Mont-Cenis, and Mont-Genèvre passes and the Corniche road, which open the Alps to access from four sides—this alone represents more than eight hundred million francs. As for the mountain roads, they surpass all the Roman monuments in boldness, grandeur, labor, and ingenuity. The roads linking the Pyrenees with the Alps, Parma with La Spezia, Savona with Piedmont; the Pont d’Iéna, Pont d’Austerlitz, and Pont des Arts [three bridges in Paris]; the bridges at Sèvres, Tours, Roanne, Lyons, Turin, Bordeaux, Rouen; the bridges across the Isère and the

Durance, etc.; the canal joining the Rhine to the Rhône by way of the Doubs, which links the Dutch ports with the Mediterranean; the Scheldt-Somme canal, linking Amsterdam and Paris; the Rance-Vilaine canal; the Arles canal; the Pavia canal and the Rhine canal; the draining of the swamps of Bourgoin, of the Cotentin peninsula, and of Rochefort; the restoration of most of the churches destroyed in the Revolution and the building of new ones; the creation of numerous industrial establishments to wipe out begging; the enlargement of the Louvre and the construction of public granaries, of the Bank of France, of the Ourcq canal; the municipal water system in Paris; the numerous drains, quays, embellishments, and monuments of that great capital; his labors in embellishing Rome; the revival of the Lyons manufactures; the creation of several hundred cotton-spinning and weaving plants employing several million workers; the accumulation of funds intended for the creation of four hundred beet-sugar factories...; fifty million francs spent on repairing and embellishing the palaces of the Crown; sixty millions' worth of furnishings in the Crown's palaces in France, Holland, Turin, and Rome; sixty millions' worth of crown diamonds, all bought with Napoleon's money, including even the "Regent," which he recovered from the Jews of Berlin, to whom it had been pawned for three millions; the Musée Napoléon [i.e., the Louvre], whose worth is estimated at more than four hundred million francs and which contains nothing but objects legitimately acquired, either by purchase or by virtue of peace treaties...; several millions economized [to constitute a fund] for the encouragement of agriculture, which is the primary wealth of France; the institution of horse races; the introduction of Merino sheep; etc.

All this constitutes a treasure of several billions that will endure for centuries.

“THE WORLD BEGGED ME TO GOVERN IT”

{366} [Repeated saying] I found the crown of France in the gutter, and I picked it up.

[Conversation with Benjamin Constant, April 10, 1815] I wanted to rule the world, and in order to do this I needed unlimited power....I wanted to rule the world—who wouldn’t have in my place? The world begged me to govern it; sovereigns and nations vied with one another in throwing themselves under my scepter.

[Conversation, November 1815] When I took power, people would have liked me to be another Washington. Words come cheap, and no doubt those who made such glib statements were doing so in ignorance of the time and place, of men and things. If I had been in America, I would gladly have been a Washington, and without deserving much credit for it; indeed, I don’t see how it could have been reasonably possible to act otherwise. But if Washington had been a Frenchman, at a time when France was crumbling inside and invaded from outside, I would have dared him to be himself; or, if he had persisted in being himself, he would merely have been a fool and would have prolonged his country’s misfortunes. As for me, I could only be a crowned Washington. And I could become that only at a congress of kings, surrounded by sovereigns whom I had either persuaded or mastered. Then, and then only, could I have profitably displayed Washington’s moderation, disinterestedness, and wisdom. In all reason, I could not attain this goal except by means of world dictatorship. I tried it. Can it be held against me?

[Conversation, 1816] *Napoleon:* Imagine my situation [after taking power]! I realized that the destiny, the future, the doctrines of the fatherland depended on my sole person.

Las Cases: Why, Sire, this is precisely what everybody was saying, and several political groups were blaming you for it. They used to ask acidly, “What made him put himself into the necessity of tying everything to his sole person?”

Napoleon: A hackneyed and vulgar accusation! The situation was not of my choosing, it arose through no fault of mine: it was entirely due to the nature of circumstances, to the struggle between two contrary systems....The day France chose unity and concentration of power, which alone could save her, the day France coordinated her beliefs, resources, and energies, thus becoming an immense nation, and entrusted her destinies to the character, decisions, and conscience of the one man on whom she had thrust this accidental dictatorship—from that day *I* was the common cause, I was the state....There have been other phrases, escaped from the bottom of my heart, that caused just as much indignation—for instance, that “France needed me more than I needed France.” They saw merely an excess of vanity in what was in fact a profound truth. You can see it now: here [in Saint Helena] I can manage without anybody, and if it were merely a question of bearing pain, my sufferings could not be of long duration. My life is brief—but the life of France!...The vulgar have never ceased blaming all my wars on my ambitions. But were they of my choosing? Were they not always determined by the ineluctable nature of things, by the struggle between the past and the future, by the permanent coalition of our enemies, who put upon us the obligation of destroying them lest we ourselves be destroyed?

MISTAKES AND REGRETS

{367} [Conversation, 1817] A work on politics has just been published which is attributed to me. It makes me assert that a sovereign should be able

to say of himself, “I have never committed a crime.” I have done worse than that: I have committed mistakes.{368}

{369} [Conversation, 1816] I admit I have been spoiled. I have always been in command. From the moment I emerged from childhood I was vested with power; circumstances and my own strength were such that as soon as I was in command I no longer recognized either a master or laws.

[Conversation, 1816] I had to sow at a gallop, and unfortunately I often cast my seed onto sand and into sterile hands.

{370} [Conversation, 1816, on the seizure of Spain] I admit that I started off on the wrong foot in this whole business. Its immorality must have seemed too patent, its injustice too cynical; the whole thing remains very ugly, since I lost out. For, having failed, my attempt is revealed in its hideous nakedness, stripped of all grandeur and of the many beneficial reforms I contemplated. And yet posterity would have commended my deed if it had succeeded, and rightly so, perhaps, on account of its great and happy results: such is the fate of things on this earth, and thus are they judged.

[Conversation, 1817, on the campaign of 1812] All I could write about that fatal campaign would be some reflections such as: “I was wrong in staying at the Kremlin for thirty-five days; I should have stayed for two weeks only. As soon as I entered Moscow, I ought to have annihilated the remnants of Kutuzov’s forces. [On my retreat] I should have gone by way of Maloyaroslavets and marched on Tula and Kaluga. I ought to have proposed to the Russians that I should withdraw without destroying anything.”

[Conversation, 1816, on Waterloo] Everything failed me just when everything had succeeded!

HAPPINESS RE-EVALUATED

{371} [Conversation, 1816, reported by Las Cases] Speaking of his Italian campaign, and of the swift and daily victories that made this campaign so famous, we said to the Emperor that he must have derived great pleasure from it. “None whatever,” he replied.—”But, at least, Your Majesty was causing much rejoicing far away from the scene.”—”That may be. At a distance, people were merely reading about our successes, but they did not know our situation. If I had experienced pleasure, I would have rested; but the peril was always in front of me, and the day’s victory was always forgotten in the preoccupation with the necessity of winning a new victory on the morrow.”

[Conversation, 1816, reported by Las Cases] About five o'clock, the Emperor went for a walk in the garden [of Long-wood], He launched into a description of the happiness that a respectable, well-to-do private citizen could enjoy in peace, living in some corner of his province, in the fields and the house inherited from his forefathers. Nothing, to be sure, could sound more philosophical, and we could not help smiling as he was painting so idyllic a picture. This caused him to pinch the ears of one among our company. “Besides,” he went on, “this kind of happiness can scarcely be known in today’s France except as tradition has passed it on. The Revolution has overturned everything; it has deprived the older generation of that happiness, and the new generation has never known it. What I just pictured no longer exists.” And he then made the following observation: A person who has lost the room in which he was born, the garden where he played as a child, the house of his forebears—such a person has no fatherland.

[Conversation, c. 1816, on his Corsican childhood] Happy times! The

native earth has invisible charms. Memory embellishes it in all its aspects; the very smell of its soil is so present to my senses that with my eyes closed I could recognize the earth I trod as a small child.

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It’s like the sound of church bells—I miss it here. I cannot get used to not hearing it. I never heard a church bell ring without my thoughts being carried back to the sensations of my childhood....The Angelus used to plunge me into gentle revery—even when I was preoccupied with my work, with some heavy thought, with the weight of my crown—every time I heard its first sounds under the shade of the woods at Saint-Cloud. Quite often people thought I was meditating a campaign plan or a law when I was simply resting my mind by abandoning myself to the earliest impressions of my life.

[From Gourgaud’s diary, 1817] After dinner His Majesty assured us that he could live very well, in France, on twelve francs a day, spending thirty sous on his dinner, haunting literary circles and libraries, and taking cheap seats in the theater. Twenty francs a month for rent. “I’d have a very good time, and I would not keep company with anybody richer than I. By God! All men have the same dose of happiness. Surely I was not born to become what I am. Indeed, I would have been no less happy as Monsieur Bonaparte than as the Emperor Napoleon. Workingmen are just as happy as anybody else. Everything is relative.”

[Conversation, 1817] There is nothing that surpasses Paris, with its public parks and libraries. With just five francs, you can get into any theater. It could even be said that in Paris you don’t notice the weather, rain or snow: it’s always fine.

“THE BRIDGE THAT SATAN BUILT”

The following reflection is said to have been found, written in Napoleon’s hand, among some torn scraps of paper after his death.

{372} A new Prometheus, I am nailed to a rock to be gnawed by a vulture. Yes, I have stolen the fire of Heaven and made a gift of it to France. The fire has returned to its source, and I am here!

The love of glory is like the bridge that Satan built across Chaos to pass from Hell to Paradise: glory links the past with the future across a bottomless abyss. Nothing to my son, except my name!

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MAIN EVENTS IN NAPOLEON'S CAREER

YOUTH AND RISE, 1769-96

1769-79: Childhood in Corsica. 1779-85: Military school, Brienne and Paris; commissioned in artillery. 1789-93: French Revolution involves him in Corsican politics; sides with Jacobins, breaks with Paoli, flees Corsica. 1793: Directs artillery in capture of Toulon from English; promoted to brigadier general. 1795: Crushes 13 Vendémiaire riots against Directory. 1796: Marries Josephine; is given command in Italy.

CAMPAIGNS IN ITALY, EGYPT, AND SYRIA, 1796-99

1796-97: Defeats Austrians at Lodi, Arcole, Rivoli, etc.; makes peace at Campo Formio. 1798: Conquers Egypt but loses fleet at Aboukir. 1799: Syrian campaign fails at Acre; news of French defeats in Europe makes him return to France, leaving Kléber in command in Egypt.

THE CONSULATE, 1799-1804

1799: Overthrows Directory (18 Brumaire/November 9), becomes First Consul and virtual dictator. 1800: Crosses Alps, defeats Austrians at Marengo. 1801: Concordat with Church; peace with Austria. 1802: Peace with England; expedition to Santo Domingo. 1803: War with England resumed. 1803-4: Alleged plots serve as pretext for executing the due d'Enghien and establishing the Empire.

THE EMPIRE IN ASCENT, 1804-11

December 2, 1804: Crowned by Pius VII. 1805: Crowned king of Italy; naval defeat at Trafalgar leads to abandonment of plans for invading England and sharpening of economic warfare (Continental System). 1805-7: Wars with Austria, Russia, Prussia; victories of Austerlitz (1805), Jena

(1806), Friedland (1807); Russia becomes ally, Prussia is humbled in treaties of Tilsit (1807). Confederation of the Rhine established under French protection (1806); Napoleon's brothers Joseph, Louis, and Jérôme become kings of Holland (1806), Naples (1806), and Westphalia (1807); French invade Portugal (1807). *1808:* Seizes Spain; Joseph is made king of Spain; Peninsular War (1808-14) begins; Napoleon meets Alexander I of Russia at Erfurt. 1809: Defeats Austria at Wagram; annexes Papal States; divorces Josephine. 1810: Marries Marie Louise; annexes Holland. 1811: Birth of heir ("king of Rome," later known as Napoleon II).

THE FALL OF THE EMPIRE, 1812-14

June-December 1812: Invasion of Russia; capture and burning of Moscow; disastrous retreat. 1813: Austria, Prussia, Sweden declare war; Napoleon defeated at Leipzig (October 16-19); French expelled from Germany and Spain. 1814: After an obstinate defense, Napoleon abdicates (April 12); is exiled to Elba.

THE HUNDRED DAYS AND CAPTIVITY, 1815-21

March 1-20, 1815: Napoleon secretly lands in France, wins support of army, enters Paris. *June* 14-18, 1815: Waterloo campaign ends in rout. *June 21-October* 15, 1815: Second abdication; Napoleon seeks asylum in England but is taken to Saint Helena. 1815-21: Captivity and death on Saint Helena.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES on all persons named in this volume would form another volume. The following entries have been limited to (l) those contemporaries of Napoleon whose identification may contribute to the understanding of the text and (2) those named as reporters of his conversations. They exclude (1) those sufficiently identified in the context, in bracketed additions, or in footnotes and (2) well-known personalities not part of Napoleon's entourage.

Abell, Mrs., *see* Balcombe.

Abrantès, Laure Permon Junot, duchesse d', 1784-1838, wife of General Junot *(q.v.)* and author of important memoirs on Napoleon and on Parisian society. She knew Bonaparte, a protégé of her family, from her childhood.

Antommarchi, Francesco, 17897-1838, Napoleon's physician on Saint Helena from 1819 to his death, a Corsican. Though not very reliable, his memoirs are an important source for Napoleon's last years.

Balcombe, William, 1779-1829, official of the East India Company on Saint Helena and purveyor to Napoleon's household. Napoleon resided at his estate, "The Briars," October-December 1815. His daughter, Betsy Balcombe (Mrs. Abell), c. 1802-1871, was a favorite of Napoleon, who played rough games with her. She left spirited memoirs.

Beauharnais, Eugène, 1781-1824, son of Empress Josephine by her first marriage. He served ably as general under Napoleon, who adopted him and made him viceroy of Italy (1805-14).

Beauharnais, Hortense, 1783-1837, daughter of Empress Josephine by her first marriage. Napoleon married her to his brother Louis. She was

queen of Holland (from 1806 until Louis's abdication in 1810) and the mother of Napoleon III.

Beauharnais, Josephine, *see* Josephine.

Bernadotte, Jean Baptiste Jules, 1764-1844, marshal of France, as Charles XIV king of Sweden and Norway (1818-44). The husband of Désirée Clary, sister of Joseph Bonaparte's wife Julie, he was a member of the imperial family and was created prince of Pontecorvo before his adoption (1810) by Charles XIII as heir to the Swedish throne. The king left the conduct of government to him, and in 1813 Bernadotte tipped the scales against Napoleon by joining the Allies.

Berthier, Louis Alexandre, 1753-1815, marshal of France, Napoleon's chief of staff from 1796 to 1814. Napoleon made him prince of Wagram and of Neuchâtel.

Bertrand, Henri Gratien, 1773-1844, French general, an excellent engineer. He accompanied Napoleon to Elba and to Saint Helena as grand marshal of the palace and stayed with him until his death.

Bingham, Sir George, 1776-1833, brigadier general, commander of the 53rd Foot Regiment, which guarded Napoleon on Saint Helena.

Bonaparte, Carlo, 1746-85, Napoleon's father, a lawyer in Ajaccio.

Bonaparte, Caroline, 1782-1839, sister of Napoleon. She married Murat *(q.v.)* in 1800. As queen of Naples (1808-15) she intrigued against her brother.

Bonaparte, Hortense, *see* Beauharnais, Hortense.

Bonaparte, Jérôme, 1784-1860, Napoleon's youngest brother. As a young navy officer he met and married (1803) Elizabeth Patterson in Baltimore.

Napoleon had the marriage annulled, married him to Princess Catherine of Württemberg, and made him king of Westphalia (1807-13). Jérôme distinguished himself by his irresponsible and flamboyant expenditures.

Bonaparte, Joseph, 1768-1844, Napoleon's elder brother. Napoleon employed him on important diplomatic missions and made him king of Naples (1806-8) and of Spain (1808-13). He showed little ability in any of his posts and frequently attracted his brother's ire. After 1815 Joseph lived mainly at his estate at Bordentown, N.J.

Bonaparte, Letizia, 1750-1836, Napoleon's mother, "Madame Mère."

Bonaparte, Louis, 1778-1846, brother of Napoleon, who married him to Hortense Beauharnais and made him king of Holland in 1806. A bad husband but a conscientious ruler, he favored Dutch against French interests and was generally popular. Threatened with war by his hectoring brother, he abdicated in 1810 and fled to Austria. He was the father of Napoleon III.

Bonaparte, Lucien, 1775-1840, brother of Napoleon. As president of the Council of Five Hundred he took a decisive part in helping Napoleon to power on 18 Brumaire (1799). He then served as minister of the interior and as ambassador to Spain, but his unauthorized marriage to a divorcée in 1803 precipitated a violent break with Napoleon. Lucien retired to Italy and was created prince of Canino by the pope. During the Hundred Days (1815) he returned to France and supported Napoleon.

Borghese, Camillo, Prince, 1775-1832, Roman nobleman, second husband of Napoleon's sister Pauline.

Bourrienne, Louis Antoine Fauvelet de, 1769-1834, Napoleon's schoolmate at Brienne, later his private secretary (1797-1802). His financial transactions caused a break with the First Consul. Bourrienne's memoirs,

largely ghostwritten from his notes, are more reliable for the earlier than the later parts.

Cambacérès, Jean Jacques Régis de, 1753-1824, French jurist. He took an important part in the French Revolution, became Second Consul after 18 Brumaire (1799), arehchancellor (1804), and minister of justice (1815).

Caulaincourt, Louis, marquis de, c. 1772-1827, French diplomat and general, created duke of Vicenza by Napoleon. He was ambassador to Russia (1807-11) and in 1812 vainly sought to dissuade Napoleon from his Russian campaign. He accompanied Napoleon on his return from Russia to Paris and was foreign minister in 1814 and 1815. His memoirs, published in 1933, are among the most interesting and reliable of the period.

Chaptal [de Chantéloup], Jean Antoine, comte, 1756-1832, French scientist and economist, minister of the interior (1801-4). He was a pioneer in applied chemistry and planned many of the public works undertaken by Napoleon. His memoirs are informative and remarkably honest.

Chateaubriand, François René, vicomte de, 1768-1848, French writer and statesman, author of *Le Génie du christianisme, Atala, René,* and *Mémoires d'outretombe.* An émigré, he returned to France during the Consulate and at first supported Bonaparte, who gave him diplomatic posts. He broke with Napoleon after the execution of the duc d'Enghien (1804) and played a major political role under the restored Bourbons. In his memoirs he did justice to Napoleon's greatness.

Constant, Benjamin, 1767-1830, French writer and politician, born at Lausanne, Switzerland. Long the lover of Mme de Staël *(q.v.),* he was a leader of the opposition in the Tribunate until his expulsion (1801), welcomed the Bourbons in 1814, but was enticed by Napoleon in 1815 to support him on his return from Elba. He was the chief framer of the Acte

Additionnel, by which the constitution was liberalized.

Daru, Pierre Antoine, comte, 1767-1829, Napoleon's chief army commissary, one of his ablest administrators.

Desaix de Veygoux, Louis, 1768-1800, French general. He conquered Upper Egypt and played a decisive part in Napoleon's victory at Marengo, where he was killed.

Des Mazis, birth and death dates unknown, friend of Napoleon's youth; a fellow artillery officer.

Duroc, Géraud Christophe Michel, 1772-1813, French general. Napoleon made him grand marshal of the palace and created him duke of Frioul. He was killed in the battle of Bautzen.

Enghien, Louis Antoine Henri de Bourbon-Condé, duc d', 1772-1804, French prince of the blood, son of the prince de Condé, under whom he fought against the revolutionary armies. Claiming that Enghien was leading a plot against his life, Napoleon ordered him kidnaped from Baden and shot after an irregular court-martial at Vincennes.

Fouché, Joseph, 1759-1820, French minister of police (1799-1802, 1804-10). An inveterate turncoat, he took part in the Reign of Terror, served under the Directory, the Consulate, and the Empire, helped the Bourbons in 1814, joined Napoleon during the Hundred Days, then again supported the Bourbons. Napoleon created him duke of Otranto in 1809.

Ganteaume, Honoré, 1755-1818, French admiral.

Genlis, Stéphanie Félicité de, 1746-1830, French woman of letters. The governess of the future King Louis Philippe, she wrote works on education as well as fiction.

Girardin, Stanislas, comte de, 1762-1827, French politician, son of the marquis de Girardin, on whose estate at Ermenonville Rousseau spent his last days.

Gourgaud, Gaspard, 1783-1852, French general, chief orderly officer to Napoleon, whose exile on Saint Helena he shared until 1818. He published part of Napoleon's memoirs and left important memoirs of his own.

Josephine, 1763-1814, Empress of the French. Born in Martinique as Marie Josèphe Rose Tascher de la Pagerie, she married Vicomte Alexandre de Beauharnais, by whom she had two children, Eugène and Hortense *(see under* Beauharnais). Her husband was guillotined in 1794 and she was briefly imprisoned. While the mistress of Barras, one of the Directors, she met young Bonaparte, who married her in 1796. Napoleon divorced her in 1809, because she had borne him no heir. Their relationship remained friendly.

Junot, Andoche, 1771-1813, French general. Napoleon created him duke of Abrantès after he had led the invasion of Portugal in 1807.

Las Cases, Emmanuel, comte de, 1766-1842, one of Napoleon's companions (1815-16) on Saint Helena and author of the *Mémorial,* which was to become the gospel of Napoleon worshipers. Regardless of its shortcomings, the *Mémorial* is a precious record of Napoleon's conversations.

Lebrun, Charles François, 1739-1824, French politician. He was Third Consul (1799-1804) and governor of Holland from 1810.

Leclerc, Charles Victor Emmanuel, 1772-1802, French general, first husband of Napoleon's sister Pauline. He commanded the French expedition to Santo Domingo, where he died of yellow fever.

Marie Louise, 1791-1847, Empress of the French, daughter of Emperor Francis I of Austria. Napoleon married her in 1810, and she bore him a son in 1811—the “king of Rome” *(see* Napoleon II). Brought to Vienna after Napoleon’s abdication in 1814, she was soon consoled, was awarded the duchies of Parma and Piacenza, and married (below her rank) twice after Napoleon’s death.

Montholon, Charles Tristan, marquis de, 1783-1853, French general. He accompanied Napoleon to Saint Helena, where he remained till the Emperor’s death.

Murat, Achille, 1801-47, eldest son of Joachim Murat and nephew of Napoleon. He lived in Florida after 1823.

Murat, Caroline, *see* Bonaparte, Caroline.

Murat, Joachim, 1767-1815, marshal of France, a brilliant cavalry commander. He married Napoleon’s sister Caroline and was made grand duke of Berg (1806) and king of Naples (1808). To save his throne he made peace with Austria in 1813, but he supported Napoleon during the Hundred Days, was defeated, and was executed after an attempt to regain his throne.

Napoleon II, 1811-32, son of Napoleon I by Marie Louise. He had the title “king of Rome” until 1814. His father abdicated in his favor in 1815, but he never reigned and was taken to Austria, where he was styled “the duke of Reichstadt.”

Narbonne, Louis, comte de, 1755-1813, French diplomat and general, aide-de-camp to Napoleon during the Russian campaign.

O’Meara, Barry Edward, 1786-1836, British naval surgeon, born in Ireland. He accompanied Napoleon to Saint Helena as personal physician, but his feud with Sir Hudson Lowe resulted in his forced return to England

(1818). His memoirs are abominably written but informative.

Poniatowski, Jozef Anton, Prince, 1763-1813, Polish general, nephew of the last king of Poland. He fought in several Napoleonic campaigns and drowned while retreating from Leipzig.

Portalis, Jean Etienne Marie, 1746-1807, French jurist. He took a leading part in negotiating the Concordat of 1801 and in drawing up the Code Napoléon.

Rémusat, Claire de Vergennes, comtesse de, 1780-1821, lady in waiting to Josephine during the Consulate and the Empire, author of lively memoirs.

Rœderer, Pierre Louis, comte, 1754-1835, French statesman. He played an important part in the Conseil d'état and wrote fairly reliable memoirs.

Savary, René, 1774-1833, French general. He was created duke of Rovigo in 1807 and in 1810 succeeded Fouché as police minister.

Ségur, Philippe Paul, comte de, 1780-1873, French general. His account of the Russian campaign of 1812 is a classic.

Staël, Auguste de, 1790-1827, eldest son of M^{me} de Staël.

Staël, Germaine Necker, baronne de, 1766-1817, French woman of letters; daughter of Jacques Necker, finance minister under Louis XVI. She played an important part behind the scenes during the French Revolution; under the Directory, her salon was all-powerful. She at first supported Napoleon but soon became his bitter opponent. Exiled from Paris, she traveled throughout Europe, mobilizing anti-Napoleonic feeling and writing several celebrated books, notably the novel *Corinne* and the classic *De l'Allemagne,* which Napoleon ordered destroyed (1810).

Talleyrand, Charles Maurice de, 1754-1839, French statesman, perhaps the most celebrated diplomat of all time. Bishop of Autun, he played a part in the French Revolution, went abroad in 1793, returned in 1795 (he was by then defrocked), became foreign minister in 1799, was created prince of Benevento in 1805, but resigned in 1807 because of his opposition to Napoleon's foreign policy. Secretly working against Napoleon's interest, he played a decisive part in restoring Louis XVIII in 1814 and reached the peak of his career as French foreign minister at the Congress of Vienna (1814-15).

Talma, François Joseph, 1763-1826, the greatest tragic actor in Napoleonic France.

Walewska, Maria, Countess, 1789-1817, Polish noblewoman. Napoleon met her during his Polish campaign in 1807, made her his mistress, and had a son by her (Count Alexander Walewski, 1810-68, French diplomat under Napoleon III). She visited Napoleon at Elba.

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SOURCES AND NOTES

THE LIST BELOW by no means represents the full canon of Napoleon's written or spoken words. It merely lists the sources actually used in this collection.

The Notes following the list of sources are grouped by numerals. Each numeral corresponds to the figure preceding a group of selections in the text, from 1 through 340. Information supplied between square brackets at the head of selections has not been repeated in the Notes except where necessary for clarity. All references in the Notes are in abbreviated form; full data can be found in the list of sources. Thus, the source reference to the last selection under No. 64 reads: Ségur, I, 251. The Ségur entry in the list fills in the details.

The combination of bracketed information in the text, Sources, and Notes is intended to supply all necessary information.

In the case of Las Cases's *Mémorial*, of which there are many editions, the usual method of citing by volume and page has been abandoned; instead, the date of entry used in the *Mémorial* is given as reference for the passage quoted. (The reader must be warned that the date of the entry in the *Mémorial* is not necessarily the date on which Napoleon made the statement quoted.)

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{1} Las Cases, 16 November 1815. *Ibid.,* 20 May 1816.

{2} Ségur, III, 506. Las Cases, 29-30 November 1815.

{3} Martel, IV, 497. To the Committee of Public Safety, 25 October 1793, *Corr.,* I, 11. Conversation with Fontanes, cited in Martel, III, 6. Las Cases, 23 July 1816. *Ibid.,* 8 November 1816. *Ibid.,* 23 September 1816. *Ibid.,* 8 November 1816.

{4} Bourrienne, II, 150. Thibaudeau, *Mémoires,* 1799-1815, p. 74. Iung, III, 94-95.

{5} Bourrienne, II, 150. Gourgaud, I, 316. *Ibid.,* I, 475.

{6} Bourrienne, III, 7. Staël, *Dix Années,* p. 146. To Ferdinand, prince of the Asturias, 16 April 1808, *Corr.,* XVII, 10.

{7} Iung, II, 143. Gourgaud, II, 201.

{8} Bausset, II, 312. Mollien, II, 520. Roederer, pp. 237-38.

{9} Rémusat, I, 246.

{10} 6 September 1795, *Corr.,* I, 87. Gourgaud, I, 572.

{11} Rémusat, I, 115. To Berthier, 10 April 1806, *Corr.,* XII, 270. Méneval, II, 372. Gourgaud, II, 18.

{12} To Cambacérès, 6 November 1813, Lecestre, II, 293.

{13} Bourrienne, II, 138-39. Rémusat, I, 267.

{14} Roederer, p. 323.

{15} Gourgaud, I, 300. *Ibid.,* I, 428. *Ibid.,* II, 445. *Ibid.,* II, 444.

{16} Montholon, II, 31-32.

{17} Rémusat, I, 268. Las Cases, 7 December 1815.

{18} Masson and Biagi, pp. 460-61. *Ibid.,* p. 523.

{19} Rémusat, I, 265. *Corr.,* XV, 395-96. Iung, III, 105. Gourgaud, II, 8.

{20} Masson and Biagi, pp. 21-23.

{21} With Countess Maria Walewska, whom he met in Poland and by whom he had a son.

{22} Gourgaud, I, 305-7.

{23} To Joseph, 12 July 1795, *Corr.,* I, 61.

{24} Staël, *Dix Années,* p. 46n (quoted by Paul Gautier from "Souvenirs inédits" of Golofkine). Gourgaud, I, 127, and Las Cases, 13 August 1816. Gourgaud, I, 390.

{25} Bourrienne, III, 401-2. Staël, *Considérations,* p. 334. Gourgaud, II, 54.

{26} 6 November 1806, *Lettres de Napoléon à Josephine,* p. 75. Gourgaud, II, 311-12. *Ibid.,* II, 169-70.

{27} Las Cases, 16 November 1815. O'Meara, II, 32. Gourgaud, I, 390-91. *Ibid.,* II, 231.

{28} Celebrated Italian singer (1773-1850). She briefly was Napoleon's mistress in 1800.

{29} Brotonne, *Lettres inédites,* p. 6. *Lettres de Napoléon à Josephine,* p. 5. *Ibid.,* p. 23.

{30} Bourrienne, III, 437. Gourgaud, II, 229-30.

{31} Montholon, II, 103-4.

{32} *Corr.,* XV, 225ff.

{33} Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat,* p. 432. Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire,* III, 203-4. *Ibid.,* III, 194-95. *Procès-verbaux,* I, 327.

{34} Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat,* p. 430. Las Cases, 19 May 1816.

{35} 19 January 1801, *Corr.,* VI, 582. *Lettres de Napoléon à Josephine,* p. 94. *Corr.,* XIV, 207.

{36} Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat,* p. 451. 4 April 1807 *Corr.,* XV, 25.

{37} *Procès-verbaux,* I, 347. Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat,* pp. 442, 448. Gourgaud, I, 390.

{38} *Procès-verbaux,* I, 359, 306-7, 359.

{39} 15 May 1807, *Corr.,* XV, 229. 24 May 1807, *Lettres de Napoléon à Josephine,* p. 119. Gourgaud, I, 461.

{40} Iung, III, 119.

{41} 22 March 1811, *Corr.,* XXI, 495-96. Rémusat, I, 111. 14 August 1813, Lecestre, II, 287.

{42} Gourgaud, I, 105-6. Las Cases, 23 September 1816.

{43} Bourrienne, V, 121. *Corr.,* XXV, 321-22. Bourrienne, V, 153. To the comtesse de Montesquiou, *Corr.,* XXV, 368.

{44} 5 April 1796, Stendhal, II, 227 (erroneously dated 6 April). Las Cases, 22 July 1816.

{45} **“Discours sur le bonheur,” in Masson and Biagi, p. 551. Gourgaud, I, 386.**

{46} **O’Meara, I, 128-29. Gourgaud, I, 440. Antommarchi, I, 214.**

{47} **Las Cases, 17 August 1816. *Ibid.*, 7-8 June 1816. Gourgaud, II, 408. Antommarchi, II, 118.**

{48} **“Discours sur le bonheur,” in Masson and Biagi, p. 560. 5 June 1800, *Corr.*, VI, 339. Gourgaud, II, 409-10.**

{49} **Gaspard Monge (1746-1818), an eminent mathematician, and Pierre Simon de Laplace (1749-1827), the great astronomer. Napoleon was their fellow member in the Academy of Sciences.**

{50} **Marquiset, p. 29. Las Cases, 2-3 August 1815. *Ibid.*, 3 October 1816. Gourgaud, I, 434. *Ibid.*, I, 546-47.**

{51} **Las Cases, 7-8 June 1816. Antommarchi, I, 259-60. *Ibid.*, II, 118-19.**

{52} **Masson and Biagi, pp. 5-6. To Clarke, 19 November 1796, *Corr.*, II, 120.**

{53} ***Corr.*, VII, 460. Ségur, I, 249. *Ibid.*, III, 535. “Réflexions sur le suicide,” in *Corr.*, XXXI, 485-86.**

{54} **Nevertheless it seems that he attempted suicide on the following night.**

{55} **Masson and Biagi, pp. 534-37. Rémusat, I, 242.**

{56} **The words in parenthesis are struck out in the manuscript.**

{57} **Bourrienne, II, 135. *Ibid.*, II, 241. 6 August 1802, Lecestre, I, 389. 27 November 1802, *Corr.*, VIII, 113.**

{58} **“Discours sur le bonheur,” in Masson and Biagi, p. 567. Las Cases, 19 August 1816.**

{59} **To Manfredini, 1 February 1797, *Corr.*, II, 294. To Josephine, 27 March 1807, *Corr.*, XIV, 553. Las Cases, 2-3 August 1815. *Ibid.*, 1 October 1816.**

{60} **“18 Brumaire,” in *Corr.*, XXX, 303. O’Meara, I, 105. Gourgaud, II, 77. *Ibid.*, II, 270.**

{61} **Napoleon exaggerates; his family were poor but held noble status—just like that of Jesus, incidentally.**

{62} **26 September 1797, *Corr.*, III, 342. Las Cases, 14 November 1816.**

{63} **2 June 1805, *Corr.*, X, 474. Bourrienne, III, 432. 3 December 1806, *Lettres de Napoléon à Josephine*, p. 82. Las Cases, 20 July 1816.**

{64} Bourrienne, I, 296. *Corr.,* IV, 360-61. Ségur, II, 219-20.

{65} To the Directory, 16 April 1797, *Corr.,* II, 491. Rémusat, II, 227. *Campagnes d'Egypte et de Syrie,* in Martel, IV, 97. Fain, 1812, I, 323-24. Caulaincourt, II, 329. Fain, 1813, II, 26, 30. Campagne de 1815, in *Corr.,* XXXI, 190. Iung, III 347. Las Cases, cited in Damas Hinard, p. 266.

{66} Las Cases, 4-8 January 1816. Gourgaud, II, 224.

{67} Masson and Biagi, pp. 572-73.

{68} Rœderer, p. 174. Staël, *Considérations,* p. 434. 9 May 1805, *Corr.,* X, 391.

{69} Las Cases, 18 September 1816. Gourgaud, II, 55-56.

{70} Bourrienne, I, 230. Rémusat, I, 274. Bourrienne, II, 342. Ségur, I, 251.

{71} Conversation with Decrès, cited in Martel, III, 3-4. 25 July 1817, *Corr.,* XXXII, 399.

{72} Las Cases, 20 November 1816.

{73} *Corr.,* IV, 240 (quoted from *Campagnes d'Egypte et de Syrie).*

{74} To Talleyrand, 23 November 1805, *Corr.,* XI, 433. Las Cases, 28 April 1816.

{75} To Schimmelpenninck, 2 May 1805, *Corr.,* X, 402. "Notes sur l'art de la guerre," in *Corr.,* XXXI, 346. Chaptal, p. 308.

{76} Masson and Biagi, p. 118.

{77} Pelet, p. 168.

{78} Las Cases, 20 September 1816. "Note, Concile de 1811," in *Corr.,* XXX, 549.

{79} *Campagnes d'Egypte et de Syrie,* in *Corr.,* XXIX, 475-78.

{80} Las Cases, 6 November 1816.

{81} *Corr.,* VI, 1. Caulaincourt, II, 294.

{82} Constant, *Vie privée de Napoléon,* I, 129.

{83} Las Cases, 14 November 1816. Gourgaud, II, 435-36.

{84} *Précis des guerres de Jules César,* in *Corr.,* XXXII, 89.

{85} *Campagnes d'Egypte et de Syrie,* in Martel, IV, 169. Las Cases, 17 August 1816. Gourgaud, I, 210. *Ibid.,* II, 13. Bourrienne, II, 382. *Précis des guerres de Turenne,* in *Corr.,* XXXII, 146.

{86} Rémusat, I, 334-35. *Précis des guerres de Frédéric II,* in *Corr.,* XXXII, 238.

{87} Gourgaud, II, 35.

{88} Barrai, pp. 226-27.

{89} To Fath Ali Shah, 11 February 1805, *Corr.,* X, 148-49.

{90} 19 April 1807, *Corr.,* XV, 107, 109.

{91} To Cretet, 12 April 1808, *Corr.,* XVI, 489-91.

{92} Montholon, I, 210-12; cf. Las Cases, 3 September 1816.

{93} "Manuscrit de l'Ile d'Elbe," chap. iii, as transcribed by Las Cases, 8 September 1816. Las Cases, 9-10 August 1816.

{94} Iung, I, 468. *Mémoires* of Stanislas Girardin, cited in Méneval, I, 270. Gourgaud, I, 197.

{95} Iung, II, 208. *Corr.,* XXIV, 343. Las Cases, 23 June 1816.

{96} Rémusat, I, 270. *Campagnes d'Italie,* in *Corr.,* XXIX, 295.

{97} Masson and Biagi, p. 12. Iung, II, 224. Bourrienne, II, 406. *Ibid.,* II, 489. *Ibid.,* Ill, 42-43. Constant, *Vie privée de Napoléon,* I, 325.

{98} Masson and Biagi, pp. 1-3.

{99} 20 February 1803, *Corr.,* VIII, 217. To Lebrun, 26 September 1810, Lecestre, II, 70. To Lebrun, 13 February 1811, *ibid.,* II, 113.

{100} 25 April 1804, *Corr.,* IX, 341.

{101} *Corr.,* VI, 25. Marquiset, p. 75. Las Cases, 18 April 1816.

{102} Iung, II, 241. Staël, *Dix Années,* p. 141. Rémusat, III, 153. *Ibid.,* I, 273.

{103} Montholon, I, 112 (this slogan has been cited in many places). Las Cases, 18 July 1816. *Ibid.,* 2 May 1816.

{104} Rémusat, I, 183. Rœderer, p. 6.

{105} 15 November 1807, *Corr.,* XVI, 166.

{106} Masson and Biagi, p. 521. Gourgaud, I, 325.

{107} *Corr.,* XXVIII, 261. Las Cases, 11 November 1816. *Ibid.,* same date.

{108} Pelet, pp. 164-65. Conversation with Fontanes, cited in Martel, III, 7.

{109} Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat,* pp. 79-80.

{110} Rœderer, p. 50. Las Cases, 5 July 1816.

{111} 19 September 1797, *Corr.,* III, 313-14. Pelet, pp. 63-64. Las Cases, 7 September 1816.

{112} Roederer, p. 16.

{113} 11 December 1802, *Corr.,* VIII, 129. 29 January 1803, *ibid.,* VIII, 194. 29 January 1803, *ibid.,* VIII, 188-89.

{114} Chuquet, *Ordres et apostilles,* III, 6. Pelet, p. 148. Marquiset, p. 48. To Tavema, 11 August 1805, *Corr.,* XI, 77. Pelet, pp. 146-47.

{115} 21 December 1809, Lecestre, I, 383. Fain, 1814, pp. 22-23. Martel, II, 463.

{116} Gourgaud, I, 93.

{117} *Journal de Paris,* 15 Pluviôse, and *Mercure de France, 16* Pluviôse, Year ix, cited in Gautier, pp. 64-65. Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire, II,* 412. Iung, II, 408.

{118} Martel, III, 112. Quoted by Napoleon in "Consuls provisoires," in *Corr.,* XXX, 334. 12 March 1803, *Corr.,* VIII, 246. Las Cases, 1 June 1816.

{119} Las Cases, 27 October 1816.

{120} Mollien, I, 261-62. Damas Hinard, p. 7. *Ibid.,* p. 310.

{121} Pelet, pp. 193-94. Damas Hinard, p. 311. Mollien, as cited in Damas Hinard, p. 51. Las Cases, 3 October 1816.

{122} Damas Hinard, p. 217. *Corr.,* XI, 539. To Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely, *Corr.,* XIV, 402.

{123} In 1810, however, Napoleon did establish book censorship. For his interference with the periodic press, see Nos. 160-163.

{124} To Pozzo di Borgo, cited in Iung, I, 49. Rœderer, p. 76. Chaptal, pp. 257-58.

{125} Either the notary or Chaptal, who reported the conversation, made a slip. Napoleon had been elected First Consul for life in 1802.

{126} "Notes—Prisons d'Etat," in *Corr.,* XXX, 569-70. *Corr.,* XXXII, 392.

{127} Pelet, p. 239. Las Cases, 17 June 1816.

{128} That is, the followers of the free-trade theories of the physiocrats and of Adam Smith.

{129} To the Consuls of the Republic, 10 February 1810, *Corr.,* VII, 18. Las Cases, 16 June 1816.

{130} *Campagnes d'Italie,* in *Corr.,* XXIX, 304-5. Caulaincourt, II, 232. 19 December 1813, *Corr.,* XXVI, 519.

{131} 8 September 1808, *Corr.,* XVII, 497, 499. To Mollien, 15 May 1810, *Corr.,* XX, 352-53.

{132} Mollien, I, 259-60.

{133} Las Cases, 11-12 April 1816. *Précis des guerres de César,* in Marchand, pp. 209—10. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France sous Napoléon,* cited in Damas Hinard, p. 390. Las Cases, 18 July 1816.

{134} Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire,* III, 30. Damas Hinard, p. 342. *Ibid.,* p. 443. *Ibid.,* p. 344. *Ibid.,* p. 443.

{135} "Discours sur le bonheur," in Martel I, 26, 31.

{136} Las Cases, 10 November 1815. O'Meara, I, 276.

{137} To Lebrun, 19 May 1811, Lecestre, II, 133.

{138} Chaptal, pp. 284-85. 7 March 1805, *Corr.,* X, 196-97. 1 September 1807, *Corr.,* XVI, 1-2.

{139} To Melzi, 8 July 1802, *Corr.,* VII, 516. *Corr.,* XXIII, 303.

{140} Decision, 5 March 1807, *Corr.,* XIV, 377. Pelet, p. 222. *Ibid.,* p. 289.

{141} 6 February 1801, *Corr.,* VII, 13. November 1808, *Corr.,* XVIII, 31-32.

{142} Masson and Biagi, pp. 9-10, 17.

{143} 6 May 1797, *Corr.,* III, 24. 10 September 1797, *ibid.,* III, 284. 28 August 1798, *ibid.,* IV, 420. Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat,* p. 152. Rœderer, p. 18. Pelet, p. 223. *Ibid.,* p. 210.

{144} Staël, *Considérations,* p. 373. Marquiset, p. 71. Pelet, p. 223.

{145} Las Cases, 17 August 1816. O'Meara, I, 119. "Notes sur…les quatre concordats," in *Corr.,* XXX, 558.

{146} Masson and Biagi, p. 1. Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire,* V, 255.

{147} 25 January 1810, Lecestre, II, 6. 25 July 1810, Lecestre, II, 57. Las Cases, 20 July 1816.

{148} 26 September 1796, *Corr.,* II, 13. 12 June 1798, *ibid.,* IV, 139. 10 May 1809, Lecestre, I, 309-10.

{149} Apparently the bishop had shown his sympathy with Austria in the war of 1809.

{150} January 1806, *Corr.*, XI, 529. 13 February 1806, *Corr.*, XII, 40. 20 June 1809, Lecestre, I, 317. May 1810, *Corr.*, XX, 356. 6 January 1811, Lecestre, II, 103. To the Comité ecclésiastique, 16 March 1811, *Corr.*, XXI, 482. *Ibid.*

{151} Interview with Father Maurice of Brescia, as told in Iung, 237. Las Cases, 17 August 1816. Gourgaud, I, 408.

{152} Gourgaud, II, 270-71.

{153} Pelet, pp. 213-15. *Corr.*, XII, 411.

{154} *Corr.*, XIII, 100-103. *Ibid.*, XIII, 583, 584.

{155} Bourrienne, III, 175.

{156} "Discours sur le bonheur," in Masson and Biagi, p. 566. 23 March 1805, *Corr.*, X, 258.

{157} 22 November 1801, *Corr.*, VII, 332. 19 April 1807, *ibid.*, XV, 103. Pelet, pp. 175-76.

{158} 15 August 1805, *Corr.*, XI, 95. 16 February 1805, *ibid.*, X, 147-48. Chuquet, *Inédits napoléoniens*, II, 48.

{159} Du Casse, *Supplément*, pp. 60-61. Las Cases, 18 November 1815.

{160} Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac (1755-1814), former Jacobin leader known as "the Anacreon of the guillotine." Napoleon employed him as a secret agent.

{161} Marquiset, p. 35. 9 September 1804, *Corr.*, IX, 511. 16 April 1806, *ibid.*, XII, 291. O'Meara, I, 261.

{162} Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire*, II, 206. 10 April 1806, *Corr.*, XII, 273.

{163} To Ripault, 23 July 1801, *Corr.*, VII, 201.

{164} Las Cases, 10 June 1816; cf. O'Meara, I, 137-38.

{165} 4 July 1800, *Corr.*, VI, 395. 11 December 1806, *Corr.*, XIV 64. 31 December 1806, Lecestre, I, 84.

{166} Russia was at the time fighting Persia in the Caucasus. Needless to say, Napoleon was at war with Russia.

{167} *Corr.*, XXVII, 262; cf. Brotonne, *Dernières Lettres inédites*, II, 507. *Corr.*, XXVII, 245-46.

{168} *Moniteur*, May 1803, cited in Martel, I, 196-98.

{169} 53rd Bulletin, *Corr.,* XIV, 224. Bulletin (unnumbered), *ibid.,* XVIII, 96-97.

{170} 30th Bulletin, *Corr.,* XI, 448-53.

{171} The number is exaggerated, as is the "immensity" of the lake in the next paragraph. The Russians may have tried to escape across a frozen pond and drowned when Napoleon directed his guns to fire on the ice. However, Friedrich von Kircheisen, one of Napoleon's most authoritative biographers, states firmly that the entire incident is a pure invention *(Napoleon I.: Sein Leben und seine Zeit,* VI [Munich, 1930], 502-3).

{172} 29th Bulletin, *Corr.,* XXIV, 325-29.

{173} The final sentence of the bulletin sounds more callous than it really is. It was meant to answer a rumor that Napoleon was dead, a rumor which only a few days earlier had led to an abortive coup d'état in Paris. It was the news of that coup which determined Napoleon to make his dash to Paris immediately after dictating the preceding bulletin.

{174} *Corr.,* X, 336. *Ibid.,* X, 344. 6 March 1806, *ibid.,* XII, 157. To Clarke, 4 September 1809, Picard and Tuetey, III, 220.

{175} 19 November 1808, *Corr.,* XVIII, 71-72.

{176} 24 February 1814, *Corr.,* XXVII, 239. Las Cases, 13 June 1816.

{177} Bourrienne, II, 132-33.

{178} 18 October 1797, *Corr.,* III, 390. 15 June 1802, *ibid.,* VII, 492. 29 September 1803, *ibid.,* IX, 9. 4 June 1807, *ibid.,* 307-8.

{179} Brotonne, *Dernières Lettres inédites,* I, 63. *Corr.,* XVIII, 26.

{180} Gourgaud, II, 311.

{181} Las Cases, 11 June 1816.

{182} Gourgaud, I, 439. O'Meara, II, 159-60. Antommarchi, I, 384, 385, 420.

{183} 15 June 1799, *Corr.,* V, 454. 31 August 1806, *ibid.,* XIII, 26 May 1807, *ibid.,* XV, 269. O'Meara, I, 39, 117.

{184} Pelet, p. 176. Las Cases, 21 August 1816. Antommarchi, 261.

{185} 9 November 1806, *Corr.,* XIII, 507. Las Cases, 8 March 1816. Antommarchi, I, 366. *Ibid.,* I, 425.

{186} Las Cases, 18-19 November 1816.

{187} Las Cases, 22 July 1816. *Ibid.,* same date. *Ibid.,* 27 May 1816.

{188} 19 April 1807, *Corr.,* XV, 104-6. Las Cases, 21-22 March 1816.

{189} Rémusat, I, 278. Chaptal, pp. 333-34. Las Cases, 4 August 1816.

{190} Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire,* V, 188-89. Bausset, IV, Las Cases, 21 July 1816. "Notes sur…les quatre concordats," in *Corr.,* XXX, 559.

{191} Chaptal, p. 269. Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire,* cited in Damas Hinard, p. 427.

{192} Bausset, IV, 237.

{193} 14 May 1806, *Corr.,* XII, 372-73. Bausset, IV, 228.

{194} To the Inspectors of the Paris Conservatory, 26 July 1797, *Corr.,* III, 200. *Ibid.,* V, 224. 17 February 1806, *ibid.,* XII, 56. "Notes sur l'art de la guerre," in *Corr.,* XXXI, 313.

{195} "Discours sur le bonheur," in Masson and Biagi, p. 560. Rémusat, I, 103. To Joseph, *Corr.,* XI, 285. To Champagny, *ibid.,* XI, 286. Abell, pp. 36-37.

{196} The *Devin du village* is a pretty little comic opera by J.-J. Rousseau, who is better remembered for other things.

{197} P. F. Tissot, *Souvenirs...sur Talma,* cited in Augustin-Thierry, p. 147. Audibert, *Indiscrétions et confidances,* cited *ibid.,* pp. 148-49.

{198} Ségur, I, 250-51. To Fouché, 31 December 1806, *Corr.,* XIV, 127. Goethe, XXXVII, 87.

{199} Rémusat, I, 279. Las Cases, 25-28 February 1816.

{200} Las Cases, 15 November 1816. Gourgaud, II, 226.

{201} Las Cases, 19 August 1816.

{202} Las Cases, 7 May 1816. *Ibid.,* 8 October 1816.

{203} "Note sur le deuxième livre de l'Enéide de Virgile," in Marchand, pp. 227-31.

{204} To Joseph, 9 February 1806, *Corr.,* XII, 29. 21 November 1806, *ibid.,* XIII, 561. 19 April 1807, *ibid.,* XV, 98f. Gourgaud, I, 457.

{205} To Cambacérès, 24 January 1806, *Corr.,* XI, 554. To Joseph, 18 July 1807, *ibid.,* XV, 430.

{206} Rémusat, I, 278.

{207} Rémusat, I, 280. Roederer, pp. 164-65. Las Cases, 22-25 April 1816. *Ibid.,* 1 June 1816.

{208} Las Cases, 6 September 1816.

{209} Gourgaud, I, 548.

{210} Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire,* III, 229-30.

{211} Rémusat, II, 391. O'Meara, II, 11. *Campagnes d'Italie,* in *Corr.,* XXIX, 308.

{212} Goethe, XXXVII, 86.

{213} Rémusat, II, 403.

{214} Rémusat, II, 399. Las Cases, 13 August 1816.

{215} Mme de Staël's father, Jacques Necker, finance minister in 1789, married Suzanne Curchod, who had once been engaged to Gibbon. Napoleon's description of the Necker household is, if anything, an understatement.

{216} Actually, to her lover, Benjamin Constant.

{217} Letter to Talleyrand, 7 October 1797, *Corr.,* III, 371. 10 November 1804, *ibid.,* X, 48. 21 October 1807, *ibid.,* XVI, 109. Iung, III, 97. Fiévée, *Correspondance avec Napoléon,* cited in Gautier, p. 403.

{218} Rémusat, I, 280. *Ibid.,* I, 338. Las Cases, 20 November 1816. Gourgaud, I, 136.

{219} To Cambacérès, 3 August 1811, *Corr.,* XXII, 367. Rémusat, 1,108. Guizot, I, 68. Las Cases, 6 December 1815. Gourgaud, I, 481.

{220} Las Cases, 9-11 July 1816.

{221} Rémusat, I, 335-36. Du Casse, *Mémoires du roi Joseph,* I, 39.

{222} Rémusat, I, 117. Caulaincourt, II, 278. Las Cases, 18-19 November 1816. *Ibid.,* 30 June and 18-19 November 1816.

{223} "Discours sur le bonheur," in Martel, I, 25. "Dialogue sur l'amour," in Masson and Biagi, p. 528.

{224} Marquiset, p. 34. Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire,* III, 320. 11 August 1805, *Corr.,* XI, 75. 4 February 1806, *ibid.,* XII, 5. 8 March 1806, *ibid.,* XII, 166. 4 April 1807, *ibid.,* XV, 24.

{225} Rémusat, III, 102-3. Rœderer, p. 290. 15 December 1806, Lecestre, I, 84. 14 March 1814, *ibid.,* II, 321. Las Cases, 24 December 1815.

{226} Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire,* II, 49. *Ibid.,* I, 115. Las Cases, 22-25 April 1816. *Ibid.,* 14

September 1816.

{227} Abrantès, I, 132-33 (chap. ix). To Cambacérès, 30 July 1813, Lecestre, II, 271.

{228} 27 December 1804, *Corr.,* X, 93-94. Ségur, II, 199.

{229} 7 June 1805, *Corr.,* X, 488-89. 27 July 1805, *ibid.,* XI, 48.

{230} 16 January 1809, Lecestre, I, 275.

{231} 16 July 1808, Lecestre, I, 218. 17 July 1809, *ibid.,* I, 327.

{232} 15 December 1806, Lecestre, I, 84. 25 October 1807, *Corr.,* XVI, 118.

{233} 12 October 1807, Lecestre, I, 113.

{234} Gourgaud, I, 350-51.

{235} Las Cases, 18 July 1816. 23 March 1806, *Corr.,* XII, 213.

{236} To Carnot, 9 August 1796, *Corr.,* I, 533. Mollien, I, 314. 27 February 1806, *Corr.,* XII, 107. Chaptal, p. 353.

{237} 12 November 1800, *Corr.,* VI, 507. 19 October 1801, *ibid.,* VII, 295. 4 July 1802, *ibid.,* VII, 508 l. 27 July 1802, *ibid.,* VII, 539. 7 June 1805, *ibid.,* X, 490. "Fragments de la campagne d'Italie: Retour de Radstadt," chap. iv, transcribed by Las Cases in *Mémorial,* chap. vi.

{238} Bourrienne, II, 200. Gourgaud, I, 398.

{239} 7 June 1805, *Corr.,* X, 489. To General Lauriston, 27 March 1813, *ibid.,* XXV, 133. O'Meara, II, 20.

{240} Remark aimed at Sir Hudson Lowe, who had served as an intelligence officer before his appointment as governor of Saint Helena.

{241} 20 June 1805, *Corr.,* X, 545. 1 January 1809, *ibid.,* XVIII, 168.

{242} O'Meara, I, 284. 27 October 1798, *Corr.,* V, 96. 5 January 1800, *ibid.,* VI, 69-70. 7 September 1807, Lecestre, I, 108. Chuquet, *Inédits napoléoniens,* II, 149. Gourgaud, I, 385.

{243} Actually, grapeshot.

{244} To Cambacérès, 20 July 1813, Lecestre, II, 271. Las Cases, 24 September 1816.

{245} October 1808, *Lettres de Napoléon à Josephine,* p. 144. Caulaincourt, II, 221. Las Cases, 10-12 March 1816.

{246} O'Meara, II, 6.

{247} O'Meara, II, 31-32. Gourgaud, II, 401.

{248} *Corr.*, XVII, 50. *Ibid.*, XVII, 39-40.

{249} He had just been dethroned by his son; both father and son came to Bayonne to put their respective cases before Napoleon, who made both of them abdicate.

{250} Las Cases, 7 August 1816.

{251} Gourgaud, I, 485. Caulaincourt, II, 252.

{252} Las Cases, 11-12 April 1816.

{253} Rémusat, II, 245.

{254} Rémusat, I, 105. To Caulaincourt, 4 February 1814, *Corr.*, XXVII, 109.

{255} To Champagny, 19 January 1810, *Corr.*, XX, 132.

{256} Las Cases, 16 November 1816.

{257} Las Cases, 7 September 1816. "Note sur la politique de Pitt," in *Corr.*, XXX, 493. Las Cases, 6 November 1816.

{258} To Eugène Beauharnais, 23 August 1810, *Corr.*, XXI, 60.

{259} To Villetard, 26 October 1797, *Corr.*, III, 400. Rœderer, p. 239.

{260} Masson and Biagi, p. 4. 9 April 1797, *Corr.*, II, 472-73. Gourgaud, II, 170.

{261} *Corr.*, II, 207. *Ibid.*, II, 483. *Ibid.*, Ill, 235. *Ibid.*, III, 369-70. To Villetard, *ibid.*, Ill, 400. "Notes sur le manuscrit venu de Sainte-Hélène," *ibid.*, XXXI, 241.

{262} 27 May 1797, *Corr.*, III, 74. To Talleyrand, 3 April 1802, *ibid.*, VII, 428. 20 May 1810, Lecestre, II, 33.

{263} 2 December 1811, *Corr.*, XXIII, 44-45. *Ibid.*, XXIV, 407.

{264} *Précis des guerres de Turenne*, in *Corr.*, XXXII, 104.

{265} 9 September 1808, Lecestre, I, 241-42. Caulaincourt, II, 238. *Letters from the Cape of Good Hope*, pp. 55-56.

{266} 27 December 1800, *Corr.*, VI, 546. 19 November 1806, Chuquet, *Inédits napoléoniens*, I, 56. 25 November 1806, Picard and Tuetey, I, 406-7. *Corr.*, XIV, 302. 18 May 1807, *ibid.*, XV, 244. To Champagny, 24 April 1810, *ibid.*, XX, 156. To the king of Württemberg, 2 April 1811, *ibid.*, XXII, 17. Fain, *1812*, I, 49-50.

{267} 25 December 1799, *Corr.*, VI, 42. I *bid.*, VII, 315. *Ibid.*, VII, 445-46. *Ibid.*, VII, 503.

{268} In other words, they were to be reduced to slavery in fact.

{269} Thibaudeau, *Mémoires sur le Consulat,* p. 120. Gourgaud, I, 402. "Notes sur la révolution de Saint-Domingue," in *Corr.*, XXX, 535.

{270} To Talleyrand, 4 July 1802, *Corr.*, VII, 508. 16 January 1804, *ibid.*, IX, 209. 2 August 1810, *ibid.*, XXI, 2. Gourgaud, II, 316.

{271} To Maret, 23 August 1811, *Corr.*, XXII, 432.

{272} Abrantès, I, 433 (chap. xxx). *Corr.*, X, 100-101.

{273} Las Cases, 24 May 1816. *Ibid.*, 3 March 1816. *Ibid.*, 20 April 1816.

{274} Pelet, p. 173. O'Meara, II, 52-53. *Ibid.*, I, 112. *Ibid.*, II, 240-41.

{275} 22 November 1801, *Corr.*, VII, 337. 30 May 1805, Lecestre, I, 51. 3 December 1809, *Corr.*, XX, 50. Caulaincourt, II, 213.

{276} 25th Bulletin, *Corr.*, XI, 420-21.

{277} *Corr.*, XVI, 498-99. Lecestre, I, 198.

{278} *Corr.*, XXI, 509. *Ibid.*, XXII, 15.

{279} Barral, pp. 233-35.

{280} Napoleon's failure to take Acre in 1799 cut short his projected march through Asia. Cf. No. 64.

{281} *Corr.*, XXIII, 529. Caulaincourt, I, 433. *Corr.*, XXV, 262. *Ibid.*, XXIV, 403.

{282} Las Cases, 6 November 1816. O'Meara, II, 45.

{283} *Précis des guerres de Turenne,* in *Corr.*, XXXII, 123.

{284} *Bataille de Waterloo,* in Martel, IV, 53.

{285} *Corr.*, V, 536-37. *Ibid.*, V, 537. *Ibid.*, V, 541.

{286} 64th Bulletin, *Corr.*, XIV, 363—64.

{287} 21 July 1804, *Corr.*, IX, 426-27. Caulaincourt, I, 394. O'Meara, I, 127.

{288} Las Cases, 1-3 December 1815.

{289} 21 February 1805, *Corr.*, X, 157. 12 September 1806, *ibid.*, 170.

{290} 13 December 1805, *Corr.,* XI, 472. 18 June 1813, Lecestre, 248. Fain, 1813, II, 75. Conversation with Bausset, cited in Martel, III, 29; also reported in Ségur, III, 335.

{291} Quoted in Champagny's dispatch to Ambassador Andréossy, 16 August 1808, *Corr.,* XVII, 442. 2 April 1811, *ibid.,* XXII, 16.

{292} 29 December 1799, *Corr.,* VI, 57. 16 June 1808, *Corr.,* 311.

{293} Chuquet, *Inédits napoléoniens,* II, 14-15 (from Mack's unpublished notes).

{294} Chaptal, p. 304. *Ibid.,* pp. 304-5.

{295} *Corr.,* XXIV, 221-22. Gourgaud, II, 265-66.

{296} Pelet, p. 167. "Observations sur les campagnes de 1796 et 1797," in *Corr.,* XXIX, 343. "Notes sur l'art de la guerre," *ibid.,* XXXI, 417.

{297} 25 December 1799, *Corr.,* VI, 39. 20 February 1801, *ibid.,* VII, 40. Gourgaud, II, 82. *Ibid.,* II, 33.

{298} Euphemism for bubonic plague.

{299} *Corr.,* V, 239. 15 September 1804, *ibid.,* IX, 527. 1 October 1809, *ibid.,* XIX, 542.

{300} 1 March 1805, *Corr.,* X, 181. Chaptal, p. 299. Pelet, p. O'Meara, I, 129-30. Gourgaud, I, 405.

{301} *Corr.,* I, 179. *Ibid.,* I, 186.

{302} *Corr.,* I, 345-46.

{303} 12 March 1800, *Corr.,* VI, 178. Martel, III, 33. *Corr.,* 106. Martel, III, 92-93.

{304} Chaptal, pp. 296-98. *Campagne de* 1815, in *Corr.,* XXXI, 199.

{305} To Decrès, 12 September 1804, *Corr.,* IX, 524. Las Cases, 6 November 1816.

{306} This seems to be the closest that Napoleon ever came to saying that "an army travels on its stomach."

{307} "Mémoire sur l'armée d'Italie," July 1795, *Corr.,* I, 65. July 1795, *ibid.,* I, 75.

{308} "Le Souper de Beaucaire," in Martel, I, 169. 2 July 1808, *Corr.,* XVII, 409. Fain, 1813, II, 320. *Précis des guerres de Frédéric II,* in *Corr.,* XXXII, 209-10.

{309} Abrantès, II, 3, note 2. Gourgaud, I, 569.

{310} To Clarke, 28 January 1809, Picard and Tuetey, II, 653. 16 March 1809, *ibid.*, II, 781. Chaptal, p. 248. Gourgaud, 167.

{311} 21 December 1796, *Corr.*, II, 195. "Notes sur l'art de la guerre," in *Corr.*, XXXI, 410. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France sous Napoléon*, cited in Damas Hinard, p. 246. "Notes sur l'histoire de la guerre en Allemagne, 1756," in *Corr.*, XXXI, 429. "Notes sur l'art de la guerre," *ibid.*, XXXI, 314.

{312} To Daru, 17 June 1813, *Corr.*, XXV, 396.

{313} Corr, XVII, 472. *Ibid.*, XVII, 480.

{314} Iung, II, 162. Gourgaud, II, 425.

{315} "Précis des événements militaires arrivés pendant les six premiers mois de 1799," in *Corr.*, XXX, 266. Las Cases, 4-5 December 1815.

{316} 12 December 1804, *Corr.*, X, 69. O'Meara, I, 153-54.

{317} "Note faisant suite à la réponse à M. Dunan," in *Corr.*, III, 163. To Joseph, 6 June 1806, *ibid.*, XII, 442. Rémusat, I, 333. Las Cases, 14 November 1816.

{318} "Précis des événements militaires arrivés pendant les six premiers mois de 1799," in *Corr.*, XXX, 263. Gourgaud, II, 459-60. *Ibid.*, II, 460.

{319} Las Cases, 4-5 December 1815. O'Meara, cited in Damas Hinard, p. 58. *Précis des guerres de César*, in Marchand, p. 204.

{320} "Notes sur l'art de la guerre," in *Corr.*, XXXI, 365. *Ibid.*, XXXI, 338.

{321} "Notes sur l'art de la guerre," in *Corr.*, XXXI, 347.

{322} *Corr.*, XXXI, 348-49. Gourgaud, II, 161-62.

{323} Léon Aulne, a hero in Napoleon's Guards.

{324} *Corr.*, XXXI, 349-50. *Ibid.*, XXXI, 408.

{325} *Corr.*, XXXI, 353-54. Gourgaud, II, 162.

{326} *Corr.*, XXXI, 354. Gourgaud, II, 122-23.

{327} *Corr.*, XXXI, 355.

{328} *Précis des guerres de Frédéric II*, in *Corr.*, XXXII, 238-39. *Ibid.*, XXXII, 184. Gourgaud, II, 33.

{329} **“Notes sur l’art de la guerre,” in *Corr.*, XXXI, 387, note 1.**

{330} **Rœderer, p. 4.**

{331} **“Note faisant suite à la réponse à M. Dunan,” in *Corr.*, III, 161-62.**

{332} **28 March 1806, *Corr.*, XII, 230-31.**

{333} ***Corr.*, XXVI, 154-55.**

{334} ***Corr.*, XXVII, 223-24.**

{335} ***Campagne de 1815*, in *Corr.*, XXXI, 211-13. O’Meara, I, 300-301.**

{336} **Las Cases, 20 November 1816. *Ibid.*, 11 November 1816.**

{337} **Kidnaped from Germany on Napoleon’s orders in 1804, the due d’Enghien was summarily tried on trumped-up charges and shot at Vincennes.**

{338} **Chaptal, pp. 217-19. Bourrienne, II, 135-36.**

{339} **7 October 1797, *Corr.*, III, 371. Bourrienne, III, 144; cf. Thibaudeau, *Consulat et Empire*, III, 79 (where Napoleon is cited as having said these words to Fox), and Las Cases, 23 September 1816. Bourrienne, III, 433-34. Las Cases, u November 1816. *Ibid.*, 24 August 1816.**

{340} **Las Cases, 14-18 September 1815. 27 January 1806. *Corr.*, XI, 560. Rémusat, I, 407-8. Las Cases, 4 August 1816.**

{341} **10 February 1805, *Corr.*, X, 143. Las Cases, 14 November 1816. *Ibid.*, same date. *Ibid.*, same date. *Ibid.*, same date.**

{342} **O’Meara, I, 176. Las Cases, 3 November 1816.**

{343} **Las Cases, 13 April 1816.**

{344} **Las Cases, 18-20 January 1816.**

{345} **Caulaincourt, II, 236-37.**

{346} **Las Cases, 7 September 1816.**

{347} **O’Meara, II, 44.**

{348} **Iung, II, 161. Caulaincourt, II, 319-20. O’Meara, II, 5, 9. Gourgaud, I, 568.**

{349} **This prophecy of American strength was, of course, meant to be applied to the War of 1812. However, it seems more perspicacious—aside from political alignments—in 1955 than in**

1812.

{350} **Las Cases, 16 November 1816.**

{351} **Montholon, II, 87-100.**

{352} **Rœderer, pp. 212-13. *Ibid.*, p. 240. Las Cases, 22 June 1816.**

{353} **Rœderer, pp. 244-49, 251-52.**

{354} **The actual text of the letters—which Rœderer paraphrases somewhat inaccurately—can be found in *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier,* XVIII, 253-54, 292-93 (Napoleon's letters dated February 6 and 27, 1809), and in Du Casse, ed., *Mémoires du roi Joseph,* VI, 59-62 (Joseph's letter, dated February 19, 1809). Rœderer's paraphrases are faithful to the general content and tone of the letters.**

{355} **Napoleon's agent in Madrid, in charge of property seized by the French from the Spanish "rebels." Actually, Napoleon himself took him to task for his unauthorized conduct.**

{356} **Spanish financier and diplomat, chairman of the Board of Trade under King Joseph. His daughter was married to Duroc.**

{357} **Bourrienne, IV, 336-42.**

{358} **The allusion is to Necker's book, *Dernières Vues de politique et de finances* (1802). written largely under Mme de Staël's inspiration.**

{359} ***Campagnes d'Egypte et de Syrie,* in Martel, IV, 122. *Corr.,* V, 221-22. Rémusat, I, 125. Las Cases, 26 April 1816.**

{360} ***Corr.,* VI, 4. Chuquet, *Ordres et apostilles,* III, 5.**

{361} **Rémusat, I, 332. 22 May 1808, *Corr.,* XVII, 183. 7 December 1808, *ibid.,* XVIII, 104. To M. Otto, 21 April 1809, *ibid.,* XVIII, 492. Las Cases, 17 August 1816. Gourgaud, II, 61.**

{362} **Bourrienne, II, 142.**

{363} **Las Cases, 1 May 1816.**

{364} **Las Cases, 29 August 1816. *Ibid.,* 2 November 1816. *Ibid.,* 18-19 November 1816. *Ibid.,* 21 October 1816. Martel, IV, 501.**

{365} **Las Cases, 1-6 September 1815 (near the end of that entry). *Ibid.,* 29 September 1816.**

{366} **Caulaincourt, II, 246; also cited by Mme de Staël, Ségur, and others. Benjamin Constant, "Deuxième Lettre sur les Cent Jours," in *Mémoires sur les Cent Jours,* Part II, pp. 23-24. Las**

Cases, 29-30 November 1815. *Ibid.*, *2* September 1816.

{367} Gourgaud, II, 97.

{368} Napoleon is borrowing Fouché's remark on the execution of the due d'Enghien: "It's worse than a crime, it's a mistake."

{369} Las Cases, 31 October 1816. *Ibid.*, *20* July 1816.

{370} Las Cases, 14 June 1816. Gourgaud, II, 13-14. Las Cases, 18 June 1816.

{371} Las Cases, 26 June 1816. *Ibid.*, 18 February 1816. Montholon, I, 179-80; cf. Las Cases, 29 May 1816, and Bourrienne, II, 142. Gourgaud, I, 458. *Ibid.*, I, 573.

{372} Norvins, IV, 501-2.

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